

L E T T E R S
O N

Several Subjects.

BY THE LATE

Sir THOMAS FITZOSBORNE, Bart.

To which is added,

(Translated by the same hand)

A Dialogue upon Oratory:

attributed to QUINCTILIAN.

Ann VOL. II. *Parker*

*Jam satis est : ne me Crispini scriinia appi
Compiasse putes. ——— HOR.*

D U B L I N :

Printed for M. OWEN in Skinner-Row, G. FAULKNER
in Essex-Street, and W. BRIEN in Dame-Street,
Bookiellers. MDCCLIII.

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LETTERS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LETTER XLIV.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 1719.

I Entirely approve of your design : but whilst I rejoice in the hope of seeing enthusiasm thus successfully attacked in her strongest and most formidable holds, I would claim your mercy for her in another quarter ; and after having expelled her from her religious dominions, let me intreat you to leave her in the undisturbed enjoyment of her civil possessions. To own the truth, I look upon enthusiasm in all other points but that of religion, to be a very necessary

cessary turn of mind ; as indeed it is a vein which nature seems to have marked with more or less strength in the tempers of most men. No matter what the object is, whether business, pleasure, or the fine arts ; whoever pursues them to any purpose must do so *con amore*, and innamoratos, you know, of every kind, are all enthusiasts. There is indeed a certain heightening faculty which universally prevails through our species ; and we are all of us, perhaps, in our several favourite pursuits, pretty much in the circumstances of the renowned knight of La Mancha, when he attacked the barber's brazen bason, for Mambrino's golden helmet.

What is Tully's *aliquid immensum infinitumque*, which he professes to aspire after oratory, but a piece of true rhetorical Quixotism ? Yet never, I will venture to affirm, would he have glowed with so much eloquence, had he been warmed with less enthusiasm. I am persuaded indeed, that nothing great or glorious was ever performed, where this quality had not a principal concern ; and as our passions add vigour to our actions, enthusiasm gives spirit to our passions. I might add too, that it even opens and enlarges our capacities. Accordingly I have been informed, that one of the great lights of the present age never sits down to study till he has raised his imagination by the power of musick. For this purpose he has a band of instruments placed near his library, which play till he finds himself elevated to a proper height ; upon which he gives a signal, and they instantly cease.

But those *high conceits* which are suggested by enthusiasm, contribute not only to the pleasure and perfection of the fine arts, but to most other effects of our action and industry. To strike this spirit therefore out of the human constitution, to reduce things to their precise philosophical standard, would be to check some of the main wheels of society, and to fix half the world in an useless apathy. For if enthusiasm did not add an imaginary value to most of the objects of our pursuit ; if fancy did not give them their bright-
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LETTER XLV.

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est colours, they would generally, perhaps, wear an appearance too contemptible to excite desire :

*Weary'd we should lie down in death,
This cheat of life would take no more,
If you thought same an empty breath,
I Phillis but a perjur'd whore.*

Prior.

In a word, this enthusiasm for which I am pleading, is a beneficent enchantress, who never exerts her magic but to our advantage, and only deals about her friendly spells in order to raise imaginary beauties, or to improve real ones. The worst that can be said of her is a kind deceiver and an obliging flatterer. Let me conjure you then, good Clytander, not to break up her useful enchantments, which thus surround us on every side ; but spare her harmless deceptions in mere charity to mankind. I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

To PHILOTES.

Aug. 5, 1708.

I Should not have suffered so long an interval to interrupt our correspondence, if my expedition to Euphronius had not wholly employed me for these last six weeks. I had long promised to spend some time with him before he embarked with his regiment for Flanders ; and as he is not one of these Hudibrastick heroes who choose to run away one day, that they may live to fight another ; I was unwilling to trust the opportunity of seeing him to the very precarious contingency of his return. The high enjoyments he leaves behind him, might indeed be a pledge to his friends that his caution would at least be equal to his courage, if his notions of honour were less exquisitely delicate. But he will undoubtedly act as if

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he had nothing to hazard ; though at the same time, from the generous sensibility of his temper, he feels every thing that his family can suffer in their fears for his danger. I had an instance whilst I was in his house, how much Euphronia's apprehensions for his safety are ready to take alarm upon every occasion. She called me one day into the gallery to look upon a picture which was just come out of the painter's hands ; but the moment she carried me up to it, she burst out into a flood of tears. It was drawn at the request, and after a design of her father's, and is a performance which does great honour to the ingenious artist who executed it. Euphronius is represented under the character of Hector when he parts from Andromache, who is personated in the piece by Euphronia ; as her sister, who holds their little boy in her arms, is shadowed out under the figure of the beautiful nurse with the young Astyanax.

I was so much pleased with the design in this uncommon family-piece, that I thought it deserved particular mention ; as I could wish it were to become a general fashion to have all the pictures of the same kind executed in some such manner. If instead of furnishing a room with separate portraits a whole family were to be introduced into a single piece, and represented under some interesting historical subject, suitable to their rank and character ; portraits, which are now so generally and so deservedly despised, might become of real value to the publick. By this means history-painting would be encouraged amongst us, and a ridiculous vanity turned to the improvement of one of the most instructive, as well as the most pleasing, of the imitative arts. Those who never contributed a single benefit to their own age, nor will ever be mentioned in any after-one, might by this means employ their pride and their expence in a way, which might render them entertaining and useful both to the present and future times. It would require, indeed, great judgment and address in the painter, to choose and recommend subjects proper to the various characters

characters which would present themselves to his pencil ; and undoubtedly we should see many enormous absurdities committed, if this fashion were universally to be followed. It would certainly, however afford a glorious scope to genius ; and probably supply us, in due time with some productions which might be mentioned with those of the most celebrated schools. I am persuaded at least, that great talents have been sometimes lost to this art, by being confined to the dull, though profitable, labour of senseless portraits ; as I should not doubt, if the method I am speaking of were to take effect, to see that very promising genius, who, in consequence of your generous offices, is now forming his hand by the noblest models in Rome, prove a rival to those great masters whose works he is studying.

It cannot, I think, be denied, that the prevailing fondness of having our persons copied out for posterity, is, in the present application of it, a most absurd and useless vanity ; as, in general, nothing affords a more ridiculous scene, than those grotesque figures which usually line the mansions of a man who is fond of displaying his canvas-ancestry.

*Good Heav'n ! that fots and knaves should be so vain,
To wish their vile resemblance may remain ;
And stand recorded at their own request,
To future times a libel or a jest.*

Dryden.

You must by no means, however, imagine that I absolutely condemn this lower application of one of the noblest arts. It has certainly a very just use, when employed in perpetuating the resemblances of that part of our species, who have distinguished themselves in their respective generations. To be desirous of an acquaintance with the persons of those who have recommended themselves by their writings or their actions to our esteem and applause, is a very natural and reasonable curiosity. For myself, at least, I have often found much satisfaction in contemplating a well-chosen

chosen collection of the portrait kind, and comparing the mind of a favourite character, as it was either expressed or concealed in its external lineaments. There is something likewise extremely animating in these lively representations of celebrated merit; and it was an observation of one of the Scipio's, that he could never view the figures of his ancestors, without finding his bosom glow with the most ardent passion of imitating their deeds. However, as the days of exemplary virtue are now no more, and we are not, many of us, disposed to transmit the most inflaming models to future times; it would be but prudence, methinks, if we are resolved to make posterity acquainted with the persons of the present age, that it should be by viewing them in the actions of the past. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

To PALAMEDES.

July 4, 1719.

NOthwithstanding the fine things you alledge in favour of the Romans, I do not yet find myself disposed to become a convert to your opinion: on the contrary, I am still obstinate enough to maintain that the fame of your admired nation is more dazzling than solid, and owing rather to those false prejudices which we are early taught to conceive of them, than to their real and intrinsic merit. If conquest indeed be the genuine glory of a state, and extensive dominions the most infallible test of national virtue; it must be acknowledged that no people in all history have so just a demand of our admiration as the Romans. But if we take an impartial view of this celebrated nation, perhaps much of our applause may abate. When we contemplate them, for instance, within their own walls, what do we see but dangerous

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convulsions of an ill-regulated policy? as we can seldom, I believe, consider them with respect to foreign kingdoms, without the utmost abhorrence and indignation.

But there is nothing which places these sons of Romulus lower in my estimation, than their unmanly conduct in the article of their triumphs. I must confess, at the same time, that they had the sanction of a god to justify them in this practice. Bacchus, or (as Sir Isaac Newton has proved) the Egyptian Sesostris, after his return from his Indian conquests, gave the first instance of this ungenerous ceremony. But though his divinity was confessed in many other parts of the world; his example does not seem to have been followed till we find it copied out in all its insolent pomp at Rome.

It is impossible to read the descriptions of these arrogant exhibitions of prosperity, and not be struck with indignation at this barbarous method of insulting the calamities of the unfortunate. One would be apt, at the first glance, to suspect that every sentiment of humanity must be extinguished in a people, who could behold with pleasure the moving instances, which these solemnities afforded, of the caprice of fortune, and could see the highest potentates of the earth dragged from their thrones, to fill up the proud parade of these ungenerous triumphs. But the prevailing maxim which ran through the whole system of Roman politicks was, to encourage a spirit of conquest; and these honours were evidently calculated to awaken that unjust principle of mistaken patriotism. Accordingly by the fundamental laws of Rome, no general was entitled to a triumph, unless he had added some new acquisition to her possessions. To suppress a civil insurrection, however dangerous; to recover any former member of her dominions, however important; gave no claim to this supreme mark of ambitious distinction. For it was their notion, it seems, (and Valerius Maximus is my authority for saying so) that there is as much difference between adding to the
terri-

territories of a commonwealth, and restoring those it has lost, as between the actual conferring of a benefit, and the mere repelling of an injury. It was but of a piece, indeed, that a ceremony conducted in defiance of humanity, should be founded in contempt of justice; and it was natural enough that they should gain by oppression, what they were to enjoy by insult.

If we consider Paulus Æmilius after his conquest of Macedonia, making his publick entry into Rome, attended by the unfortunate Perseus and his infant family; and at the same time reflect upon our Black Prince when he passed through London with his royal captive, after the glorious battle of Poitiers; we cannot fail of having the proper sentiments of a Roman triumph. What generous mind who saw the Roman consul in all the giddy exaltation of unfeeling pride, but would rather (as to that single circumstance) have been the degraded Perseus than the triumphant Æmilius? There is something indeed in distress that reflects a sort of merit upon every object which is so situated, and turns off our attention from those blemishes that stain even the most vitious characters. Accordingly in the instance of which I am speaking, the perfidious monarch was overlooked in the suffering Perseus; and a spectacle so affecting checked the joy of conquest even in a Roman breast. For Plutarch assures us, when that worthless, but unhappy, prince was observed, together with his two sons and a daughter, marching amidst the train of prisoners; nature was too hard for custom, and many of the spectators melted into a flood of tears. But with what a generous tenderness did the British hero conduct himself upon an occasion of the same kind? He employed all the artful address of the most refined humanity to conceal from his unhappy prisoner every thing that could remind him of his disgrace; and the whole pomp that was displayed upon this occasion, appeared singly as intended to lighten the weight of his misfortunes, and to do honour to the vanquished monarch.

You

You will remember, Palamedes, I am only considering the Romans in a political view, and speaking of them merely in their national character. As to individuals, you know, I pay the highest veneration to many that rose up amongst them. It would not indeed be just to involve particulars, in general reflections of any kind : and I cannot but acknowledge ere I close my letter, that though, in the article I have been mentioning, the Romans certainly acted a most unworthy part towards their publick enemies, yet they seem to have maintained the most exalted notions of conduct with respect to their private ones. That noble (and may I not add, that Christian) sentiment of Juvenal

———*Minuti*

*Semper et infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas,
Ultio*———

was not merely the refined precept of their more improved philosophers, but a general and popular maxim among them ; and that generous sentiment so much and so deservedly admired in the Roman orator ; *Non paritet me mortales inimicitias, sempiternas amicitias habere*, was, as appears from Livy, so universally received as to become even a proverbial expression. Thus Sallust likewise, I remember, speaking of the virtues of the antient Romans, mentions it as their principal characteristick, that upon all occasions they shewed a disposition rather to forgive than revenge an injury. But the false notions they had embraced concerning the glory of their country, taught them to subdue every affection of humanity, and extinguish every dictate of justice which opposed that destructive principle. It was this spirit, however, in return and by a very just consequence, that proved at length the means of their total destruction. Farewell. I am, &c.

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LETTER XLVII.

TO ORONTES.

March 10, 1726.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, wherein mankind are more frequently mistaken, than in the judgments which they pass on each other. The stronger lines, indeed, in every man's character, must always be marked too clearly and distinctly to deceive even the most careless observer; and no one, I am persuaded, was ever esteemed in the general opinion of the world as highly deficient in his moral or intellectual qualities, who did not justly merit his reputation. But I speak only of those more nice and delicate traits which distinguish the several degrees of probity and good-sense, and ascertain the quantum (if I may so express it) of human merit. The powers of the soul are so often concealed by modesty, diffidence, timidity, and a thousand other accidental affections; and the true complexion of her moral operations depends so entirely on those internal principles from whence they proceed; that those who form their notions of others by casual and distant views, must unavoidably be led into very erroneous judgments. Even Orontes, with all his candour and penetration, is not, I perceive, entirely secure from mistakes of this sort; and the sentiments you expressed in your last letter concerning Varus, are by no means agreeable to the truth of his character.

It must be acknowledged at the same time, that Varus is an exception to all general rules: neither his head nor his heart are exactly to be discovered by those indexes, which are usually supposed to point directly to the genius and temper of other men. Thus with a memory that will scarce serve him for the common purposes of life, with an imagination even more slow than his memory, and with an attention that could not carry him through the easiest proposition

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tion in Euclid ; he has a sound and excellent understanding joined to a refined and exquisite taste. But the rectitude of his sentiments seems to arise less from reflection than sensuation ; rather from certain suitable feelings which the objects that present themselves to his consideration instantly occasion in his mind, than from the energy of any active faculties which he is capable of exerting for that purpose. His conversation is unentertaining : for though he talks a great deal, all that he utters is delivered with labour and hesitation. Not that his ideas are really dark and confused ; but because he is never contented to convey them in the first words that occur. Let the orator mentioned by Tully, *metuens ne vitiosum colligeret, etiam verum sanguinem deperdebat*, he expresses himself ill by always endeavouring to express himself better. His reading cannot so properly be said to have rendered him knowing, as not ignorant : it has rather enlarged, than filled his mind.

His temper is as singular as his genius, and both equally mistaken by those who only know him a little. If you were to judge of him by his general appearance, you would believe him incapable of all the more delicate sensations : nevertheless, under a rough and boisterous behaviour, he conceals a heart full of tenderness and humanity. He has a sensibility of nature indeed beyond what I ever observed in any other man ; and I have often seen him affected by those little circumstances, which would make no impression on a mind of less exquisite feelings. This extreme sensibility in his temper influences his speculations as well as his actions, and he hovers between various hypotheses without settling upon any, by giving importance to those minuter difficulties which would not be strong enough to suspend a more active and vigorous mind. In a word, Varus is in the number of those whom it is impossible not to admire or not to despise ; and at the same time that he is the esteem of all his friends, he is the contempt of all his acquaintance. Adieu, I am, &c.

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LETTER XLVIII.

To CLYTANDER.

July 2, 1716.

YOU must have been greatly distressed indeed, Clytander; when you thought of calling me in as your auxiliary, in the debate you mention. Or was it not rather a motive of generosity which suggested that design? and you were willing, perhaps, I should share the glory of a victory which you had already secured. Whatever *your* intention was, *mine* is always to comply with your requests; and I very readily enter the lists, when I am at once to combat in the cause of truth and on the side of my friend.

It is not necessary, I think, in order to establish the credibility of a particular providence, to deduce it (as your objector, I find, seems to require) from known and undisputed facts. I should be exceedingly cautious in pointing out any supposed instances of that kind; as those who are fond of indulging themselves in determining the precise cases wherein they imagine the immediate interposition of providence is discoverable, often run into the weakest and most injurious superstitions. It is impossible indeed, unless we were capable of looking through the whole chain of things and viewing each effect in its remote connections and final issues, to pronounce of any contingency, that it is absolutely and in its ultimate tendencies either good or bad. *That* can only be known by the great author of nature, who comprehends the full extent of our total existence, and understands the influence which every particular circumstance will have in the general sum of our happiness. But though the peculiar points of divine interposition are thus necessarily, and from the natural imperfection of our discerning faculties, extremely dubious; yet it can by no means from thence be justly inferred, that the doctrine of a particular providence is either ground-

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less or absurd: the general principle may be true, though the application of it to any given purpose be involved in very inextricable difficulties.

The notion that the material world is governed by general mechanical laws, has induced your friend to argue, that "it is probable the Deity should act by the same rule of conduct in the intellectual; and leave moral agents entirely to those consequences which necessarily result from the particular exercise of their original powers." But this hypothesis takes a question for granted, which requires much proof before it can be admitted. The grand principle which preserves this system of the universe in all its harmonious order, is gravity, or that property by which all the particles of matter mutually tend to each other. Now this is a power which, it is acknowledged, does not essentially reside in matter, but must be ultimately derived from the action of some immaterial cause. Why therefore may it not reasonably be supposed to be the effect of the divine agency, immediately and constantly operating for the preservation of this wonderful machine of nature? Certain, at least, it is, that the explication which Sir Isaac Newton has endeavoured to give of this wonderful phenomenon, by means of his subtil æther, has not afforded universal satisfaction: and it is the opinion of a very great writer, who seems to have gone far into enquiries of this abstruse kind, that the numberless effects of this power are inexplicable upon mechanical principles, or in any other way than by having recourse to a spiritual agent, who connects, moves, and disposes all things according to such methods as best comport with his incomprehensible purposes.

But successful villainy and oppressed virtue are deemed, I perceive, in the account of your friend, as powerful instances to prove, that the supreme being remains an uninterposing spectator of what is transacted upon this theatre of the world. However, ere this argument can have a determining weight, it must be proved (which yet, surely, never can be proved)

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proved) that prosperous iniquity has all those advantages in reality, which it may seem to have in appearance; and that those accidents which are usually esteemed as calamities, do in truth, and in the just scale of things, deserve to be distinguished by that appellation. It is a noble saying of the philosopher cited by Seneca, "that there cannot be a more unhappy man in the world, than he who has never experienced adversity." There is nothing perhaps in which mankind are more apt to make false calculations than in the article both of their own happiness and that of others; as there are few, I believe, who have lived any time in the world, but have found frequent occasions to say with the poor hunted stag in the fable, who was entangled by those horns he had but just before been admiring;

*O me infelicem! qui nunc demum intelligo,
Ut illa mihi profuerint quæ despexeram,
Et quæ laudaram quantum lucius habuerint!*

Phœd.

If we look back upon the sentiments of past ages, we shall find, the opinion for which I am contending has prevailed from the remotest account of time. It must undoubtedly have entered the world as early as religion herself; since all institutions of that kind must necessarily be founded upon the supposition of a particular providence. It appears indeed to have been the favourite doctrine of some of the most distinguished names in antiquity. Xenophon tells us, when Cyrus led out his army against the Assyrians, the word which he gave to his soldiers, was ΖΕΥΣ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΓΕΜΩΝ, "Jupiter the defender and conductor:" and he represents that prince as attributing success even in the sports of the field, to divine providence. Thus likewise, Timoleon (as the author of his life assures us) believed every action of mankind to be under the immediate influence of the Gods; and Livy remarks of the first Scipio Africanus, that he never undertook any important affair, either of private

private or public concern, without going to the capital in order to implore the assistance of Jupiter. Valbus the Stoick, in the dialogue on the nature of the gods, expressly declares for a particular providence; and Cicero himself, in one of his orations, imputes that superior glory which attended the Roman nation, singly to this animating persuasion. But none of the ancients seem to have had a stronger impression of this truth upon their minds, than the immortal Homer. Every page in the works of that divine poet, will furnish proofs of this observation: I cannot however forbear mentioning one or two remarkable instances, which just now occur to me. When the Grecian chiefs cast lots which of them should accept the challenge of Hector, the poet describes the army as lifting up their eyes and hands to heaven, and imploring the gods that they would direct the lot to fall on one of their most distinguished heroes :

—Λαοι—θεοισι δε χαιρας ανισκον,
 Ωδε τις πιστευ, ιδωι εις υβριον ευρυ-
 ζεν παλιν, η Αιας λαχει, η Τυδιος υιον,
 Η αυτον βασιληα πολυχρηστοιο Μυκηνης ^α.

He likewise Antenor proposes to the Trojans the restitution of Helen, as having no hopes, he tells them, that any thing would succeed with them after they had broken the faith of treaties :

— νυν ορκια πιστα
 Υυσταμενοι μαχομισθα' τω υ νυ τι κερδιον ημιν
 Ελπομαι ηηλεισθαι ^β.

And

^α The people pray with lifted eyes and hands,
 And vows like these ascend from all the bands :
 Grant, thou Almighty, in whose hands is fate,
 A worthy champion for the Grecian state :
 This task let Ajax or Tydides prove,
 Or he, the king of kings below'd by Jove.
^β The ties of faith, the sworn alliance broke,
 Our impious battles the just Gods provoke. POPE.

And indeed Homer hardly ever makes his heroes succeed (as his excellent translator justly observes) unless they have first offered a prayer to heaven. "He" is perpetually, says Mr. Pope, acknowledging the hand of God in all events, and ascribing to that alone all the victories, triumphs, rewards, or punishments of men. The grand moral laid down at the entrance of his poem, ΔΙΟ; δ' ἰταλίσσῃ βολῇ, *The will of God was fulfilled*, runs through his whole work, and it is with a most remarkable care and conduct, put into the mouths of his greatest and wisest persons on every occasion."

Upon the whole, Clytander, we may safely assert, that the belief of a particular providence is founded upon such probable reasons as may well justify our assent. It would scarce therefore be wise to renounce an opinion, which affords so firm a support to the soul in those seasons wherein she stands most in need of assistance, merely because it is not possible, in questions of this kind, to solve every difficulty which attends them. If it be highly consonant to our general notions of the benevolence of the Deity (as highly consonant it surely is) that he should not leave so impotent a creature as man, to the single guidance of his own precarious faculties; who would abandon a belief so full of the most enlivening consolation, in compliance with those metaphysical reasonings which are usually calculated rather to silence than to satisfy a humble enquirer after truth? Who indeed would wish to be convinced, that he stands unguarded by that heavenly shield, which can protect him against all the assaults of an injurious and malevolent world? The truth is, the belief of a particular providence is the most animating persuasion that the mind of man can embrace: it gives strength to our hopes, and firmness to our resolutions; it subdues the insolence of prosperity, and draws out the sting of affliction. In a word, it is like the golden branch to which Virgil's hero was directed, and affords the only secure passport through the regions of darkness and sorrow. I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XLIX.

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LETTER XLIX.

To HORTENSIVS.

Aug. 12, 1712.

IF any thing could tempt me to read the Latin poem you mention, it would be your recommendation. But shall I venture to own, that I have no taste for modern compositions of that kind? There is one prejudice which always remains with me against them, and which I have never yet found cause to renounce: no true genius, I am persuaded, would submit to write any considerable poem in a dead language. A poet who glows with the genuine fire of a warm and lively imagination, will find the copiousness of his own native English scarce sufficient to convey his ideas in all their strength and energy. The most comprehensive language sinks under the weight of great conceptions; and a pregnant imagination disdains to stint the natural growth of her thoughts to the confined standard of classical expression. An ordinary genius indeed may be humbly contented to pursue words through indexes and dictionaries, and tamely borrow phrases from Horace and Virgil; but could the elevated invention of Milton, or the brilliant sense of Pope, have ingloriously submitted to lower the force and majesty of the most exalted and nervous sentiments, to the scanty measure of the Roman dialect? For copiousness is by no means in the number of those advantages which attend the Latin language as many of the ancients have both confessed and lamented. Thus Lucretius and Seneca complain of its deficiency with respect to subjects of philosophy; and Pliny the younger owns he found it incapable of furnishing him with proper terms, in compositions of wit and humour. But if the Romans themselves found their language thus penurious, in its entire and most ample supplies; how much more contracted must it be

be to us, who are only in possession of its broken and scattered remains ?

To say truth, I have observed in most of the modern Latin poems which I have accidentally run over, a remarkable barrenness of sentiment, and have generally found the poet degraded into the parodist. It is usually the little dealers of Parnassus who have not a sufficient stock of genius to launch out into a more enlarged commerce with the Muses, that hawk about these classical gleanings. The style of these performances always puts me in mind of Harlequin's snuff, which he collected by borrowing a pinch out of every man's box he could meet, and then retailed it to his customers under the pompous title of *tabac de mille fleurs*. Half a line from Virgil or Lucretius pieced out with a bit from Horace or Juvenal, is generally the motley mixture which enters into compositions of this sort. One may apply to these jack-daw poets with their stolen feathers, what Martial says to a contemporary plagiarist :

Stat contra dicitque tibi tua pagina, Fur es.

This kind of theft, indeed, every man must necessarily commit, who sets up for a poet in a dead language. For to express himself with propriety, he must not only be sure that every *single* word which he uses, is authorized by the best writers ; but he must not even venture to throw them out of that particular combination in which he finds them connected : otherwise he may run into the most barbarous solecisms. To explain my meaning by an instance from modern language : the French words *arene* and *rive*, are both to be met with in their approved authors ; and yet if a foreigner, unacquainted with the niceties of that language, should take the liberty of bringing those two words together in the following verse,

Sur la rive du fleuve amassant de l'arene ;

he would be exposed to the ridicule, not only of the critics, but of the most ordinary mechanick in Paris. For the idiom of the French tongue will not admit of the expression *sur la rive du fleuve*, but requires the phrase *sur le bord de la riviere*; as they never say *amasser de l'arene*, but *du sable*. The same observation may be extended to all languages whether living or dead. But as no reasoning from analogy, can be of the least force in determining the idiomatic proprieties of any language whatsoever; a modern Latin poet has no other method of being sure of avoiding absurdities of this kind, than to take whole phrases as he finds them formed to his hands. Thus instead of accomodating his expression to his sentiment, (if any he should have) he must necessarily bend his sentiment to his expression, as he is not at liberty to strike out into that boldness of style, and those unexpected combinations of words, which give such grace and energy to the thoughts of every true genius. True genius indeed, is as much discovered by style, as by any other distinction; and every eminent writer, without indulging any unwarranted licences, has a language which he derives from himself, and which is peculiarly and literally his own.

I would recommend therefore to these empty echoes of the antients, which owe their voice to the ruins of Rome, the advice of an old philosopher to an affected orator of his time: *Vive moribus præteritis*, said he, *loquere verbis præsentibus*. Let these poets form their conduct, if they please, by the manners of the antients; but if they would prove their genius, it must be by the language of the moderns. I would not however have you imagine, that I exclude all merit from a qualification of this kind. To be skilled in the mechanism of Latin verse, is a talent, I confess, extremely worthy of a pædagogues; as it is an exercise of singular advantage to his pupils. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER L.

To AMASIA.

July 8, 1730.

IF good manners will not justify my long silence, policy at least will : and you must confess, there is some prudence in not owning a debt one is incapable of paying. I have the mortification indeed to find myself engaged in a commerce, which I have not a sufficient fund to support ; though I must add at the same time, if you expect an equal return of entertainment for that which your letters afford, I know not where you will find a correspondent. You will scarcely at least look for him in the desert, or hope for any thing very lively from a man who is obliged to seek his companions among the dead. You who dwell in a land flowing with mirth and good humour, meet with many a gallant occurrence worthy of record : But what can a village produce, which is more famous for repose than for action, and is so much behind the manners of the present age, as scarce to have got out of the simplicity of the first ? The utmost of our humour rises no higher than punch ; and all that we know of assemblies, is once a year round our maypole. Thus unqualified, as I am, to contribute to your amusement, I am as much at a loss to supply my own ; and am obliged to have recourse to a thousand stratagems to help me off with those lingering hours, which run so swiftly, it seems by you. As one cannot always, you know, be playing at push pin, I sometimes employ myself with a less philosophical diversion ; and either pursue butter-flies or hunt rhymes, as the weather and the seasons permit. This morning not proving very favourable to my sports of the field, I contented myself with those under covert ; and as I am not at present supplied with any thing better for your entertainment, will you suffer me to set before you some of my game ?

A TALE

A TALE.

Ere Saturn's sons were yet disgrac'd,
 And heathen gods were all the taste,
 Full oft (we read) 'twas Jove's high will
 To take the air on Ida's hill.
 It chanc'd, as once with serious ken,
 He view'd from thence the ways of men,
 He saw, (and pity touch'd his breast)
 The world by three foul fiends possess'd.
 Pale *Discord* there, and *Folly* vain,
 With haggard *Vice* upheld their reign.
 Then forth he sent his summons high,
 And call'd a senate of the sky.
 Round as the winged orders press'd,
 Jove thus his sacred mind express'd:
 " Say, which of all this shining train
 " Will *Virtue*'s conflict hard sustain?
 " For see! she drooping takes her flight,
 " While not a god supports her right."
 He paus'd——when from amidst the sky,
Wit, *Innocence*, and *Harmony*,
 With one united zeal arose
 The triple tyrants to oppose.
 That instant from the realms of day,
 With gen'rous speed, they took their way:
 To Britain's isle direct their car,
 And enter'd with the ev'ning star.
 Beside the road a mansion stood,
 Defended by a circling wood.
 Hither, disguis'd, their steps they bend,
 In hopes, perchance, to find a friend.
 Nor vain their hope; for records say,
 Worth ne'er from thence was turn'd away.
 They urge the trav'ler's common chance,
 They ev'ry piteous plea advance.
 The artful tale that *Wit* had feign'd,
 Admittance easy soon obtain'd.

The dame who own'd, adorn'd the place ;
 Three blooming daughters added grace.
 The first, with gentlest manners blest
 And temper sweet, each heart possess'd ;
 Who view'd her, catch'd the tender flame :
 And soft Amasia was her name.
 In sprightly sense and polish'd air,
 What maid with Mira might compare ?
 While Lucia's eyes, and Lucia's lyre,
 Did unresisted love inspire.

Imagine now the table clear,
 And mirth in ev'ry face appear :
 The song, the tale, the jest went round,
 The riddle dark, the trick profound.
 Thus each admiring and admir'd,
 The hosts and guests at length retir'd ;
 When *Wit* thus spake her sister-train :
 " Faith, friends, our errand is but vain——
 " Quick let us measure back the sky ;
 " The'e nymphs alone may well supply
 " *Wit, Innocence, and Harmony.*

You see to what expedient solitude has reduced me, when I am thus forced to string rhymes, as boys do birds eggs, in order to while away my idle hours. But a gayer scene is, I trust, approaching, and the day will shortly, I hope arrive, when I shall only complain that it steals away too fast. It is not from any improvement in the objects which surround me, that I expect this wondrous change ; nor yet that a longer familiarity will render them more agreeable. It is from a promise I received, that Amasia will visit the hermit in his cell, and disperse the gloom of a solitaire by the chearfulness of her conversation. What inducements shall I mention to prevail with you to hasten that day ? shall I tell you, that I have a bower over-arched with jessamin ? that I have an oak which is the favourite haunt of a dryad ? that I have a plantation which flourishes with all the verdure of May, in the midst of all the cold of December ? Or may I not

LETTER LI.

23

I not hope that I have something still more prevailing with you than all these, as I can with truth assure you, that I have a heart which is faithfully yours, &c.

LETTER LI.

To ORONTES.

I Was apprehensive my last * had given you but too much occasion of recollecting the remark of one of your admired antients, that "the art of eloquence is taught by man, but it is the gods alone that inspire the wisdom of silence." That wisdom, however, you are not willing I should yet practise; and you must needs, it seems, have my farther sentiments upon the subject of oratory. Be it then as my friend requires; but let him remember, it is a hazardous thing to put some men upon talking on a favourite topick.

One of the most pleasing exercises of the imagination, is that wherein she is employed in comparing distinct ideas, and discovering their various resemblances. There is no single perception of the mind that is not capable of an infinite number of considerations in reference to other objects; and it is in the novelty and variety of these unexpected connections, that the richness of a writer's genius is chiefly displayed. A vigorous and lively fancy does not tamely confine itself to the idea which lies before it, but looks beyond the immediate object of its contemplation, and observes how it stands in conformity with numberless others. It is the prerogative of the human mind thus to bring its images together, and compare the several circumstances of similitude that attend them. By this means eloquence exercises a kind of magick power; she can raise innumerable beauties from the most barren subjects, and give the grace of novelty to the most common. The imagination is thus kept awake

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by

* See Vol. I. LET. XXIV.

by the most agreeable motion, and entertained with a thousand different views both of art and nature, which still terminate upon the principal object. For this reason I prefer the metaphor to the simile, as a far more pleasing method of illustration. In the former, the action of the mind is less languid, as it is employed at one and the same instant in comparing the resemblance with the idea it attends ; whereas in the latter, its operations are more slow, being obliged to stand still, as it were, in order to contemplate first the principal object, and then its corresponding image.

Of all the flowers, however, that embellish the regions of eloquence, there is none of a more tender and delicate nature ; as there is nothing wherein a fine writer is so much distinguished from one of an ordinary class, as in the conduct and application of this figure. He is at liberty indeed, to range through the whole compass of creation, and collect his images from every object that surrounds him. But though he may be thus amply furnished with materials, great judgment is required in choosing them : for to render a metaphor perfect, it must not only be apt but pleasing ; it must entertain, as well as enlighten. Mr. Dryden therefore can hardly escape the imputation of a very unpardonable breach of delicacy, when in the dedication of his Juvenal, he observes to the duke of Dorset, that “ some bad poems carry their owners marks “ about them — some brand or other on this *buttock* “ or that *ear*, that it is notorious who is the owner of “ the cattle.” The poet Manilius seems to have raised an image of the same injudicious kind, in that compliment which he pays to Homer in the following verses :

— *cujusque ex ore profusus*
Omnis posteritas latices in carmine duxit.

I could never read these lines without calling to mind those grotesque heads, which are fixed to the roof of the old building of King's college in Cambridge ;
which

which the ingenious architect hath represented in the act of vomiting out the rain, which falls through certain pipes most judiciously stuck in their mouths for that purpose. Mr. Addison recommends a method of trying the propriety of a metaphor, by drawing it out in visible representation. Accordingly, I think this curious conceit of the builder might be employed to the advantage of the youth in that university, and serve for as proper an illustration of the absurdity of the poet's image as that antient picture which Ælian mentions, where Homer was figured with a stream running from his mouth, and a groupe of poets lapping it up at a distance.

But besides a certain decorum which is requisite to constitute a perfect metaphor, a writer of true taste and genius will always single out the most obvious images, and place them in the most unobserved points of resemblance. Accordingly, all allusions which point to the more abstruse branches of the arts or sciences, and with which none can be supposed to be acquainted but those who have gone far into the deeper studies, should be carefully avoided, not only as pedantick, but impertinent; as they pervert the single use of this figure, and add neither grace nor force to the idea they would elucidate. The most pleasing metaphors therefore are those which are derived from the more frequent occurrences of art or nature, or the civil transactions and customs of mankind. Thus how expressive, yet at the same time how familiar, is that image which Otway has put into the mouth of Metellus, in his play of Caius Marius, where he calls Sulpitius

*That mad wild bull whom Marius lets loose
On each occasion, when he'd make Rome feel him,
To toss our laws and liberties i'th' air.*

But I never met with a more agreeable, or a more significant allusion, than one in Quintus Curtius, which is borrowed from the most ordinary object in common life. The author represents Craterus as dissuading Alexander from continuing his Indian expedition, against

enemies too contemptible, he tells him, for the glory of his arms, and concludes his speech with the following beautiful thought : *Cito gloria obsolescit in sordidissimis hostibus ; nec quidquam indignius est quam consumi eam ubi non potest ostendi.* Now I am got into Latin quotations, I cannot forbear mentioning a most beautiful passage which I lately had the pleasure of reading, and which I will venture to produce as equal to any thing of the same kind, either in antient or modern composition. I met with it in the speech of a young orator, to whom I have the happiness to be related, and who will one day, I persuade myself, prove as great an honour to his country, as he is at present to that learned society of which he is a member. He is speaking of the writings of a celebrated prelate, who received his education in that famous seminary to which he belongs, and distinguishes all that author's performances, by the following just and pleasing assemblage of diction and imagery : *In quodcumque epus se parabat, (Et per omnia sane versatile illius se duxit ingenium) nescio qua luce sibi soli propria, illi illuminavit ; haud dissimili ei aureo Titiani radio, qui per totam tabulam gliscens eam vere suam denunciat.* As there is nothing more entertaining to the imagination than the productions of the fine arts ; there is no kind of similitudes or metaphors which are in general more striking than those which allude to their properties and effects. It is with great judgment therefore that the ingenious author of the dialogue concerning the decline of eloquence among the Romans, recommends to his orator a general acquaintance with the whole circle of the polite arts. A knowledge of this sort furnishes an author with illustrations of the most agreeable kind, and sets a gloss upon his compositions that enlivens them with singular grace and spirit.

Were I to point out the beauty and efficacy of metaphorical language, by particular instances, I should rather draw my examples from the moderns than the antients ; the latter being scarcely, I think, so exact and delicate in this article of composition, as the former. The great improvements indeed in natural knowledge which

which have been made in these later ages, have opened a vein of metaphor entirely unknown to the antients, and enriched the fancy of modern wits with a new stock of the most pleasing ideas : a circumstance which must give them a very considerable advantage over the Greeks and Romans. I am sure at least of all the writings with which I have been conversant, the works of Mr. Addison will afford the most abundant supply of this kind, in all its variety and perfection. Truth and beauty of imagery is indeed his characteristical distinction, and the principal point of eminence which raises his style above that of every author in any language that has fallen within my notice. He is every where highly figurative ; yet at the same time he is the most easy and perspicuous writer I have ever perused. The reason is, his images are always taken from the most natural and familiar appearances ; as they are chosen with the utmost delicacy and judgment. Suffer me only to mention one out of a thousand I could name, as it appears to me the finest and most expressive that ever language conveyed. It is in one of his inimitable papers upon Paradise lost, where he is taking notice of those changes in nature which the author of that truly divine poem describes as immediately succeeding the fall. Among other prodigies, Milton represents the sun in an eclipse, and at the same time a bright cloud in the western region of the heavens descending with a band of angels. Mr. Addison, in order to shew his author's art and Judgment in the conduct and disposition of this sublime scenery, observes, " the whole theatre of Nature is *darkened*, that this glorious *machine* may appear in all its lustre and magnificence." I know not, Orontes, whether you will agree in sentiment with me ; but I am at a loss which to admire most upon this occasion, the poet or the critick.

There is a double beauty in images of this kind when they are not only metaphors but allusions. I was much pleased with an instance of this uncommon species, in a little poem entitled *the Spleen*. The author of that piece (who has thrown together more original thoughts than I ever read in the same compass of lines)

speaking of the advantages of exercise in dissipating those gloomy vapours which are so apt to hang upon some minds, employs the following image :

Throw but a stone, the giant dies.

You will observe, Orontes, that the metaphor here is conceived with great propriety of thought, if we consider it only in its primary view ; but when we see it pointing still farther, and hinting at the story of David and Goliath, it receives a very considerable improvement from this double application.

It must be owned, some of the greatest authors, both antient and modern, have made many remarkable slips in the management of this figure, and have sometimes expressed themselves with as much impropriety as an honest sailor of my acquaintance, a captain of a privateer, who wrote an account to his owners of an engagement, " in which he had the good fortune, he told them, of having only one of his *hands* shot through *the nose*." The great caution therefore should be, never to join any idea to a figurative expression, which would not be applicable to it in a literal sense. Thus Cicero, in his treatise *de claris oratoribus*, speaking of the family of the Scipios, is guilty of an impropriety of this kind : *O generosam stirpem* (says he) *et tanquam in unam arborem plura genera, sic in istam domum multorum insitam atque illuminatam sapientiam*. Mr. Addison, likewise has fallen into an error of the same sort, where he observes, " there is not a single view of human nature, " which is not sufficient to *extinguish* the *seeds* of pride." In this passage he evidently unites images together, which have no connection with each other. When a seed has lost its power of vegetation, I might in a metaphorical sense say it is *extinguished* : but when in the same sense I call that disposition of the heart which produces pride, the *seed* of that passion, I cannot, without introducing a confusion of ideas, apply any word to *seed*, but what corresponds with its real properties or circumstances.

Another

Another mistake in the use of this figure is, when different images are crowded too close upon each other, or (to express myself after Quintilian) when a sentence sets out with storms and tempests, and ends with fire and flames. A judicious reader will observe an impropriety of this kind in one of the late essays of the inimitable author last quoted, where he tells us, that "women were formed to temper mankind, not to set an edge upon their minds, and blow up in them those passions which are too apt to rise of their own accord." Thus a celebrated orator, speaking of that little blackening spirit in mankind, which is fond of discovering spots in the brightest characters; remarks, that when persons of this cast of temper have mentioned any virtue in their neighbour, "it is well, if to ballance the matter they do not clap some fault into the opposite scale, that so *the enemy may not go off with flying colours.*" Dr. Swift also, whose style is the most pure and simple of any of our classick writers, and who does not seem in general very fond of the figurative manner, is not always free from censure in his management of the metaphorical language. In his essay on the Dissentions of Athens and Rome, speaking of the populace, he takes notice, that "though in their corrupt notions of divine worship, they are apt to multiply their gods, yet their earthly devotion is seldom paid to above one idol at a time, whose oar they pull with less murmuring and much more skill, than when they share the *lading*, or even hold the *helm*." The most injudicious writer could not possibly have fallen into a more absurd inconsistency of metaphor, than this eminent wit has inadvertently been betrayed into, in this passage. For what connection is there between worshipping and *rowing*, and who ever heard before of pulling the oar of an idol?

As there are certain metaphors which are common to all languages; there are others of so delicate a nature as not to bear transplanting from one nation into another. There is no part, therefore, of the business of a translator more difficult to manage, than this figure.

as it requires great judgment to distinguish when it may and may not be naturalized with propriety and elegance. The want of this necessary discernment has led the common race of translators into great absurdities, and is one of the principal reasons that performances of this kind are generally so insipid. What strange work, for instance, would an injudicious interpreter make with the following metaphor in Homer ?

Nun yap warisowwnti Egea isalai akhs. IL. X. 173.

But Mr. Pope, by artfully dropping the particular image, yet retaining the general idea, has happily preserved the spirit of his author, and at the same time humour'd the different taste of his own countrymen :

*Each single Greek in this conclusive strife,
Stands on the sharpest edge of death or life.*

And now, Orontes, do you not think it high time to be dismissed from this fairy land ? Permit me, however, just to add, that this figure, which casts so much light and beauty upon works of genius, ought to be entirely banished from the severer compositions of philosophy. It is the business of the latter to separate resemblances, not to find them, and to deliver her discoveries in the plainest and most unornamented expressions. Much dispute, and perhaps many errors, might have been avoided, if metaphor had been thus confined within its proper limits, and never wandered from the regions of eloquence and poetry. I am, &c.

LETTER LII.

To PHIDIPPUS.

May 1, 1725.

IF that friend of yours, whom you are desirous to add to the number of mine, were endued with no other quality

quality than the last you mentioned in the catalogue of his virtues; I should esteem his acquaintance as one of my most valuable privileges. When you assured me, therefore, of the generosity of his disposition, I wanted no additional motive to embrace your proposal of joining him and you at **. To say truth, I consider a generous mind as the noblest work of the creation, and am persuaded, wherever it resides, no real merit can be wanting. It is perhaps the most singular of all the moral endowments : I am sure at least, it is often imputed where it cannot justly be claimed. The meanest self-love, under some refined disguise, frequently passes upon common observers for this godlike principle ; and I have known many a popular action attributed to this motive, when it flowed from no higher a source than the suggestions of concealed vanity. Good-nature, as it hath many features in common with this virtue, is usually mistaken for it : the former, however, is but the effect, possibly of a happy disposition of the animal structure, or as Dryden somewhere calls it, of a certain " milkeness of blood : " whereas the latter is seated in the mind, and can never subsist where good sense and enlarged sentiments have no existence. It is intirely founded indeed upon justness of thought, which perhaps is the reason this virtue is so little the characteristic of mankind in general. A man, whose mind is warped by the selfish passions, or contracted by the narrow prejudices of sects or parties, if he does not want honesty, must undoubtedly want understanding. The same clouds that darken his intellectual views, obstruct his moral ones ; and his generosity is extremely circumscribed, because his reasoning is exceedingly limited.

It is the distinguishing pre-eminence of the Christian system, that it cherishes this elevated principle in one of its noblest exertions. Forgiveness of injuries, I confess indeed, has been inculcated by several of the heathen moralists ; but it never entered into the established ordinances of any religion, till it had the sanction of the great author of ours. I have often however wondered that the antients, who raised so many virtues and affections

fections of the mind into divinities, should never have given a place in their temples to generosity; unless perhaps they included it under the notion of *FIDES* or *HONOS*. But surely she might reasonably have claimed a separate altar, and superior rites. A principle of honour may restrain a man from counter-acting the social ties, who yet has nothing of that active flame of generosity, which is too powerful to be confined within the humbler boundaries of mere negative duties. True generosity rises above the ordinary rules of social conduct, and flows with much too full a stream to be comprehended within the precise marks of formal precepts. It is a vigorous principle in the soul, which opens and expands all her virtues far beyond those which are only the forced and unnatural productions of a timid obedience. The man who is influenced singly by motives of the latter kind, aims no higher than at certain authoritative standards; without ever attempting to reach those glorious elevations, which constitute the only true heroism of the social character. Religion without this sovereign principle, degenerates into a slavish fear, and wisdom into a specious cunning; learning is but the avarice of the mind, and wit its more pleasing kind of madness. In a word, generosity sanctifies every passion, and adds grace to every acquisition of the soul; and if it does not necessarily include, at least it reflects a lustre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.

But I am running into a general panegyrick upon generosity, when I only meant to acknowledge the particular instance you have given me of yours, in being desirous of communicating to me a treasure, which I know much better how to value than how to deserve. Be assured, therefore, though Euphronius had none of those polite accomplishments you enumerate, yet, after what you have informed me concerning his heart, I should esteem his friendship of more worth than all the learning of antient Greece, and all the *virtu* of modern Italy. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIH.

To SAPPHO*.

March 10, 173F.

WHILE yet no am'rous youths around thee
bow,

Nor flatt'ring verse conveys the faithless vow ;
To graver notes will Sappho's soul attend,
And ere she hears the lover, hear the friend ?

Let maids less blest'd employ their meaner arts
To reign proud tyrants o'er unnumber'd hearts ;
May Sappho learn (for nobler triumphs born)
Those little conquests of her sex to scorn.
To form thy bosom to each gen'rous deed ;
To plant thy mind with ev'ry useful seed ;
Be these thy arts : nor spare the grateful toil
Where nature's hand has blest'd the happy soil.
So shalt thou know, with pleasing skill to blend
The lovely mistress and instructive friend :
So shalt thou know, when unrelenting time
Shall spoil these charms yet op'ning to their prime,
To ease the loss of beauty's transient flow'r,
While reason keeps what rapture gave before.
And oh ! whilst wit, fair dawning, spreads its ray,
Serenely rising to a glorious day,
To hail the growing lustre oft be mine,
Thou early fav'rite of the sacred Nine !

* And shall the Muse with blameless boast pretend,
In youth's gay bloom that Sappho call'd me friend :
That urg'd by me she shun'd the dang'rous way,
Where heedless maids in endless error stray ;
That scorning soon her sex's idler art,
Fair praise inspir'd and virtue warm'd her heart ;
That fond to reach the distant paths of fame,
I taught her infant genius where to aim ?

Thus

* A young lady of thirteen years of age.

Thus when the feather'd choir first tempt the sky,
 And, all unskill'd, their feeble pinions try,
 Th' experienc'd fire prescribes th' advent'rous height,
 Guides the young wing, and pleas'd attends the flight.

L E T T E R L I V.

To PALAMEDES.

July 1, 1708.

IF malice had never broke loose upon the world, till it seized your reputation, I might reasonably console with you on falling the first prey to its unrestrained rage. But this spectre has haunted merit almost from its earliest existence; and when all mankind were as yet included within a single family, one of them, we know, rose up in malignity of soul against his innocent brother. Virtue, it should seem therefore, has now been too long acquainted with this her constant persecutor, to be either terrified or dejected at an appearance so common. The truth of it is, she must either renounce her noblest theatre of action, and seclude herself in cells and desarts, or be contented to enter upon the stage of the world with this fiend in her train. She cannot triumph, if she will not be traduced; and she should consider the clamours of censure, when joined with her own conscious applause, as so many acclamations that confirm her victory.

Let those who harbour this worst of human dispositions, consider the many wretched and contemptible circumstances which attend it: but it is the business of him who unjustly suffers from it, to reflect how it may be turned to his advantage. Remember then, my friend, that generosity would lose half her dignity, if malice did not contribute to her elevation; and he that has never been injured, has never had it in his power to exercise the noblest privilege of heroick virtue. There is another consolation which may be derived
 from

from the rancour of the world, as it will instruct one in a piece of knowledge of the most singular benefit in our progress through it : It will teach us to distinguish genuine friendship from counterfeit. For he only who is warmed with the real flame of amity, will rise up to support his single negative, in opposition to the clamorous votes of an undistinguishing multitude.

He, indeed, who can see a cool and deliberate injury done to his friend, without feeling himself wounded in his most sensible part ; has never known the force of the most generous of all human affections. Every man who has not taken the sacred name of friendship in vain, will subscribe to those sentiments which Homer puts into the mouth of Achilles, and which Mr. Pope has opened and enlarged with such inimitable strength and spirit :

*A gen'rous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows ;
One should our int'rests and our passions be :
My friend must hate the man that injures me.*

IX. 609.

It may greatly also allay the pain which attends the wounds of defamation, and which are always most severely felt by those who least deserve them ; to reflect, that though malice generally flings the first stone, it is folly and ignorance, it is indolence or irresolution, which are principally concerned in swelling the heap. When the tide of censure runs strongly against any particular character, the generality of mankind are too careless or too impotent to withstand the current ; and thus without any particular malice in their own natures, are often indolently carried along with others, by tamely falling in with the general stream. The number of those who really mean one harm, will wonderfully lessen after the deductions which may fairly be made of this sort ; and the cup of unjust reproach must surely lose much of its bitterness, where one is persuaded that malevolence has the least share in mingling the draught. For nothing perhaps, stings a generous mind

mind more sensibly in wrongs of this sort, than to consider them as evidences of a general malignity in human nature. But from whatever causes these storms may arise, virtue would not be true to her own native privileges, if she suffered herself to sink under them. It is from that strength and firmness which upright intentions will ever secure to an honest mind, that, Palamedes, I am persuaded, will stand superior to those unmerited reproaches, which assault his character, and preserve an unbroken repose amidst the little noise and strife of ignorant and malicious tongues. Farewell. I am, &c.

LETTER LV.

To CLEORA.

August 11, 1708.

THOUGH it is but a few hours since I parted from my Cleora; yet I have already, you see, taken up my pen to write to her. You must not expect however, in this, or in any of my future letters, that I say fine things to you; since I only intend to tell you true ones. My heart is too full to be regular, and too sincere to be ceremonious. I have changed the manner not the style of my former conversations: and I write to you, as I used to talk to you, without form or art. Tell me then, with the same undissembled sincerity, what effect this absence has upon your usual cheerfulness? as I will honestly confess on my own part, that I am too interested to wish a circumstance so little consistent with my own repose, should be altogether reconcilable to yours. I have attempted, however, to pursue your advice, and divert myself by the subject you recommended to my thought: but it is impossible; I perceive to turn off the mind at once from an object, which it has long dwelt upon with pleasure. My heart, like a poor bird which is haunted from her nest, is still

return-

returning to the place of its affections, and after some vain efforts to fly off, settles again where all its cares and all its tenderness are centered. Adieu.

LETTER LVI.

TO PALAMÉDES.

Feb. 13, 1711.

IF one would rate any particular merit according to its true valuation, it may be necessary, perhaps, to consider how far it can be justly claimed by mankind in general. I am sure, at least, when I read the very uncommon sentiments of your last letter, I found their judicious author rise in my esteem, by reflecting, that there is not a more singular character in the world, than that of a thinking man. It is not merely having a succession of ideas, which lightly skim over the mind, that can with any propriety be styled by that denomination. It is observing them separately and distinctly, and ranging them under their respective classes; it is calmly and steadily viewing our opinions on every side, and resolutely tracing them through all their consequences and connections, that constitutes the man of reflection, and distinguishes reason from fancy. Providence, indeed, does not seem to have formed any very considerable number of our species for an extensive exercise of this higher faculty; as the thoughts of the far greater part of mankind, are necessarily restrained within the ordinary purposes of animal life. But even if we look up to those who move in such superior orbits, and who have opportunities to improve, as well as leisure to exercise their understandings; we shall find, that thinking is one of the last exerted privileges of cultivated humanity.

It is, indeed, an operation of the mind which meets with many obstructions to check its just and free direction; but there are two principles which prevail more

or

or less in the constitutions of most men, that particularly contribute to keep this faculty of the soul unemployed : I mean pride and indolence. To descend to truth through the tedious progression of well-examined deductions, is considered as a reproach to the quickness of understanding ; as it is much too laborious a method for any but those who are possessed of a vigorous and resolute activity of mind. For this reason the greater part of our species generally choose either to seize upon their conclusions at once, or to take them by rebound from others, as best suiting with their vanity or their laziness. Accordingly Mr. Lock observes, that there are not so many errors and wrong opinions in the world as is generally imagined. Not that he thinks mankind are by any means uniform in embracing truth ; but because the majority of them, he maintains, have no thought or opinion at all about those doctrines concerning which they raise the greatest clamour. Like the common soldiers in an army, they follow their leaders direct, without knowing, or even enquiring, into the cause for which they so warmly contend.

This will account for the slow steps by which truth has advanced in the world, on one side, and for those absurd systems which, at different periods, have had an universal currency on the other. For there is a strange disposition in human nature, either blindly to tread the same paths that have been traversed by others, or to strike out into the most devious extravagancies : the greater part of the world will either totally renounce their reason, or reason only from the wild suggestions of an heated imagination.

From the same source may be derived those divisions and animosities which break the union both of publick and private societies, and turn the peace and harmony of human intercourse into dissonance and contention. For while men judge and act by such measures as have not been proved by the standard of dispassionate reason, they must equally be mistaken in their estimates both of their own conduct and that of others.

If we turn our view from active to contemplative life, we may have occasion, perhaps, to remark, that thinking is no less uncommon in the literary than the civil world. The number of those writers who can with any justness of expression be termed thinking authors, would not form a very copious library, though one were to take in all of that kind which both antient and modern times have produced. Necessarily, I imagine, one must exclude from a collection of this sort, all critics, commentators, modern Latin poets, translators, and, in short, all that numerous under-tribe in the commonwealth of literature that owe their existence merely to the thoughts of others. I should reject for the same reason such compilers as Valerius Maximus and Aulus Gellius: though it must be owned, indeed, their works have acquired an accidental value, as they preserve to us several curious traces of antiquity, which time would otherwise have entirely worn out. Those teeming geniuses likewise who have propagated the fruits of their studies thro a long series of tracts, would have little pretence, I believe, to be admitted as writers of reflection. For this reason I cannot regret the loss of those incredible numbers of compositions which some of the antients are said to have produced:

*Quale fuit Cassi rapido ferventius anni
Ingenium; capsis quem fama est esse librisque
Ambussum propriis. ——— HOR.*

Thus Epicurus, we are told, left behind him three hundred volumes of his own works, wherein he had not inserted a single quotation; and we have it upon the authority of Varro's own words *, that he himself composed

* This passage is to be found in Aulus Gellius, who quotes it from a treatise which Varro had written concerning the wonderful effects of the number Seven. But the subject of this piece cannot be more ridiculous than the style in which it appears to have been com-

posed four hundred and ninety books. Seneca assures us, that Didymus the grammarian wrote no less than four thousand; but Origen, it seems, was yet more prolifick, and extended his performances even to six thousand treatises. It is obvious to imagine with what sort of materials the productions of such expeditious workmen were wrought up: sound thought and well matured reflections could have no share, we may be sure, in these hasty performances. Thus are books multiplied, whilst authors are scarce; and so much easier is it to write than to think! But shall I not myself, Palamedes, prove an instance that it is so, if I suspend any longer your own more important reflections, by interrupting you with such as mine? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LVII.

To CLYTANDER.

Nov. 7, 1716.

CAN it then be true, Clytander, that after all the fine things which have been said concerning the love of our Country, it owes its rise to the principles you mention, and was originally propagated among mankind in order to cheat them into the service of the community? And is it thus, at last, that the most generous of the human passions, instead of bearing the sacred signature of nature, can produce no higher marks of its legitimacy than the suspicious impress of art? The question is worth, at least, a few thoughts; and I will just run over the principal objections in your letter,

composed: for that most learned author of his times (as Cicero, if I mistake not, somewhere calls him) informed his readers in that performance, *se jam duodecimam annorum hebdomadam ingressum esse, et ad eum diem septuaginta hebdomadas librorum conscripsisse.* Aul. Gel. iii. 10.

letter without drawing them up, however, in a regular form.

That the true happiness of the individual cannot arise from the single exercise of the mere selfish principles, is evident, I think, above all reasonable contradiction. If a man would thoroughly enjoy his own being, he must of necessity look beyond it; his private satisfactions always encreasing in the same proportion with which he promotes those of others. Thus self-interest, if rightly directed, flows through the nearer charities of relations, friends, and dependants, till it rises, and dilates itself, into general benevolence. But if every addition which we make to the welfare of others, be really an advancement of our own; the love of our country must necessarily, upon a principle of self-interest, be a passion founded in the strictest reason: because it is a disposition pregnant with the greatest possible good, which the limited powers of man are capable of producing. Benevolence, therefore, points to our country, as to her only adequate mark: whatever falls short of that glorious end, is too small for her full gratification; and all beyond is too immense for her grasp.

Thus our country appears to have a claim to our affection, as it has a correspondent passion in the human breast: a passion, not raised by the artifices of policy, or propagated by the infection of enthusiasm, but necessarily resulting from the original constitution of our species, and conducive to the highest *private* advantage of each individual. When Curtius therefore, or the two Decii, sacrificed their lives, in order to rescue their community from the calamities with which it was threatened; they were by no means impelled (as you seem to represent them) by a political phrensy, but acted on the most solid and rational principles. The method, they pursued for that purpose, was dictated, I confess, by the most absurd and groundless superstition: yet while the impression of that national belief remained strong upon their minds, and they were thoroughly persuaded that falling in the manner we are assured they did,

did, was the only effectual means of preserving their country from ruin; they took the most rational measures of consulting their private happiness, by thus consenting to become the publick victims. Could it even be admitted (what with any degree of probability never, indeed, can be admitted) that these glorious heroes considered fame as the vaineft of shadows, and had no hopes of an after-life in any other scene of existence; still however their conduct might be justified as perfectly wise. For, surely, to a mind that was not wholly immersed in the lowest dregs of the most contracted selfishness; that had not totally extinguished every generous and social affection; the thoughts of having preferred a mere joyless existence (for such it must have been) to the supposed preservation of numbers of one's fellow creatures, must have been far more painful than a thousand deaths.

I cannot, however, but agree with you, that this affection was productive of infinite mischief to mankind, as it broke out among the Romans, in the impious spirit of their unjust conquests. But it should be remembered at the same time, that it was the usual artifice of ambition, to mask herself in the semblance of patriotism. And it can be no just objection to the noblest of the social passions, that it is capable of being inflamed beyond its natural heat, and turned, by the arts of policy, to promote those destructive purposes, which it was originally implanted to prevent.

This zeal for our country may indeed become irrational, not only when it thus pushes us on to act counter to the natural rights of any other community; but likewise when it impels us to take the measures of violence in opposition to the general sense of our own. For may not publick happiness be estimated by the same standard as that of private? and as every man's own opinion must determine his particular satisfactions, shall not the general opinion be considered as decisive in the question concerning general interest? Far am I, however, from insinuating, that the true welfare of mankind in their collective capacities depends singly

upon

upon a prevailing fancy, any more than it does in their separate: undoubtedly in both instances they may equally embrace a false interest. But whenever this is the case, I should hardly imagine that the love of our country on the one hand, or of our neighbour, on the other, would justify any methods of bringing them to a wiser choice, than those of calm and rational persuasion.

I cannot at present recollect which of the antient authors it is that mentions the Cappadocians to have been so enamoured of subjection to a despotick power, as to refuse the enjoyment of their liberties, though generously tendered to them by the Romans. Scarcely, I suppose, can there be an instance produced of a more remarkable depravity of national taste, and of a more false calculation of publick welfare; yet even in this instance it should seem the highest injustice to have attempted by force, and at the expence, perhaps, of half the lives in the state, the introduction of a more improved system of government.

In this notion I am not singular, but have the authority of Plato himself on my side, who held it as a maxim of undoubted truth in politicks, that the prevailing sentiments of a state, how much soever mistaken, ought by no means to be opposed by the measures of violence: A maxim, which if certain pretended or misguided patriots had happily embraced, much effusion of civil blood had been lately spared to our nation. Adieu. I am, &c.

L E T T E R LVIII.

To PALAMEDES.

Aug. 10, 1729.

FORGIVE me, Palamedes, if I mistrust an art, which the greatest part of philosophers has called the art of deceiving, and by which the first of orators could

could persuade the people that he had conquered at the athletick games, though they saw him fall at his adversary's feet. The voice of eloquence should ever, indeed be heard with caution ; and she whose boast it has formly been, to make little things appear considerable ; may diminish objects, perhaps, as well as enlarge them, and lessen even the charms of repose. But I have too long experienced the joys of retirement, to quit her arms for a more lively mistress ; and I can look upon ambition, though adorned in all the ornaments of your oratory, with the cool indifference of the most confirmed Stoick. To confess the whole truth, I am too proud to endure a repulse, and too humble to hope for success : qualities little favourable, I imagine, to the pretensions of him who would claim the glittering prizes which animate those that run the race of ambition. Let those honours, then, you mention, be inscribed on the tombs of others ; be it rather told on mine, that I lived and died

Unplac'd, unpension'd, no man's heir or slave.

And is not this a privilege as valuable as any of those which you have painted to my view, in all the warmest colours of your enlivening eloquence ? Bruyere, at least, has just now assured me, that “ to pay one's
“ court to no man, nor expect any to pay court to you,
“ is the most agreeable of all situations ; it is the true
“ golden age, says he, and the most natural state of
“ man.”

Believe me, however, I am not in the mistake of those whom you justly condemn, as imagining that wisdom is the companion only of retirement, and that virtue enters not the more open and conspicuous walks of life : But I will confess at the same time, that though it is to Tully I give my applause, it is Atticus that has my affection.

“ Life, says a celebrated antient, may be compared
“ to the Olympick games : some enter into those assemblies for glory, and others for gain ; while there
“ is

" is a third party (and those by no means the most contemptible) who choose to be merely spectators." I need not tell you, Palamedes, how early it was my inclination to be numbered with the last; and as nature has not formed me with powers, I am not obliged to her for having divested me of every inclination for bearing a part in the ambitious contentions of the world? Providence, indeed, seems to have designed some tempers for the obscure scenes of life; as there are some plants which flourish best in the shade. But the lowliest shrub has its use, you are sensible, as well as the loftiest oak; and perhaps your friend may find some method of convincing you, that even the humblest talents are not given in vain. Farewell. I am, &c.

L E T T E R L I X.

To H O R T E N S I U S.

ARE you aware, Hortensius, how far I may mislead you, when you are willing to resign yourself to my guidance, through the regions of criticism? Remember, however, that I take the lead in these paths, not in confidence of my own superior knowledge of them, but in compliance with a request, which I never yet knew how to refuse. In short, Hortensius, I give you my sentiments, because it is my sentiments you require: but I give them at the same time rather as doubts than decisions.

After having thus acknowledged my insufficiency for the office you have assigned me, I will venture to confess that the poet who has gained over your approbation, has been far less successful with mine. I have ever thought, with a very celebrated modern writer, that

*Le vers le mieux rempli, la plus noble pensée,
Ne peut plaire à l'esprit quand l'oreille est blessée.*

Boileau.

Thus, though I admit there is both wit in the raillery, and strength in the sentiments of your friend's moral epistle, it by no means falls in with those notions I have formed to myself, concerning the essential requisites in compositions of this kind. He seems indeed to have widely deviated from the model he professes to have had in view, and is more like Horace than *Hyperion to a Satyr*. His deficiency in point of versification, not to mention his want of elegance in the general manner of his poem, is sufficient to destroy the pretended resemblance. Nothing, in truth, can be more absurd, than to write in poetical measure, and yet neglect harmony; as of all the kinds of false style, that which is neither prose nor verse, but I know not what inartificial combination of powerless words bordered with rhyme, is far, surely, the most insufferable.

But you are of opinion, I perceive, (and it is an opinion in which you are not singular) that a negligence of this kind may be justified by the authority of the Roman satirist: yet surely those who entertain that notion, have not thoroughly attended either to the precepts or the practice of Horace. He has attributed, I confess his satirical compositions to the inspiration of a certain Muse, whom he distinguishes by the title of the *Musa pedestris*; and it is this expression which seems to have misled the generality of his imitators. But though he will not allow her to fly, he by no means intends she should creep: on the contrary, it may be said of the Muse of Horace, as of the Eve of Milton, that

—————*grace is in all her steps.*

That this was the idea which Horace himself had of her is evident, not only from the general air which prevails in his satires and epistles, but from several express declarations, which he lets fall in his progress through them. Even when he speaks of her in his greatest fits of modesty, and describes her as exhibited in his own moral writings, he particularly insists upon the ease and harmony of her motions. Though he

humbly

humbly disclaims, indeed, all pretensions to the higher poetry, the *acer spiritus et vis*, as he calls it ; he represents his style as flowing with a certain regular and agreeable cadence. Accordingly, we find him particularly condemning his predecessor Lucilius, for the dissonance of his numbers ; and he professes to have made the experiment, whether the same kind of moral subjects might not be treated in more soft and easy measures :

*Quid vetat et nosmet Lucili scripta legentes,
Quærere num illius, num rerum dura negarit
Versiculos natura magis factos et euntes
Mollius ?*

The truth is, a tuneful cadence is the single prerogative of poetry which he pretends to claim to his writings of this kind : and so far is he from thinking it unessential, that he acknowledged it as the only separation which distinguishes them from prose. If that were once to be broken down, and the musical order of his words destroyed, there would not, he tells us, be the least appearance of poetry remaining :

*Non —————
Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ.*

However, when he delivers himself in this humble strain, he is not, you will observe, sketching out a plan of this species of poetry in general ; but speaking merely of his own performances in particular. His demands are much higher, when he informs us what he expects of those who would succeed in compositions of this moral poetry. He then, not only requires flowing numbers, but an expression concise and unincumbered ; wit exerted with good breeding, and managed with reserve ; as upon some occasions the sentiments may be enforced with all the strength of eloquence and poetry : And though in some parts the piece may appear with a more serious and solemn cast of colouring, yet upon the whole,

whole, he tells us, it must be lively and *riant*. This I take to be his meaning in the following passage :

*Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententia, ne se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures ;
Et sermone opus est modo tristi, sæpe jocosæ,
Defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetæ ;
Interdum urbani, parcentis viribus atque
Extenuantis eas consulto———*

Such, then, was the notion which Horace had of this kind of writing. And if there is any propriety in these his rules, if they are founded on the truth of taste and art ; I fear the performance in question, with numberless others of the same stamp (which have not however wanted admirers) must inevitably stand condemned. The truth of it is, most of the pieces which are usually produced upon this plan, rather give one an image of Lucilius than of Horace : the authors of them seem to mistake the awkward negligence of the favourite of Scipio, for the easy air of the friend of Mæcenas.

You will still tell me, perhaps, that the example of Horace himself is an unanswerable objection to the notion I have embraced ; as there are numberless lines in his satires and epistles, where the versification is evidently neglected. But are you sure, Hortensius, that those lines which sound so unharmonious to a modern ear, had the same effect upon a Roman one ? For myself, at least, I am much inclined to believe the contrary : and it seems highly incredible, that he who had ventured to censure Lucilius for the uncouthness of his numbers, should himself be notoriously guilty of the very fault, against which he so strongly exclaims. Most certain it is, that the delicacy of the ancients with respect to numbers, was far superior to any thing that modern taste can pretend to : and that they discovered differences, which are to us absolutely imperceptible. To mention only one remarkable instance : A very ancient writer has observed upon the following verse in Virgil,

Arma

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris,

that if instead of *primus* we were to pronounce it *primis* (is being long and *us* short,) the entire harmony of the line would be destroyed. But whose ear is now so exquisitely sensible, as to perceive the distinction between those two quantities? Some refinement of this kind, might probably give musick to those lines in Horace, which now seem so untuneable.

In subjects of this nature it is not possible, perhaps, to express one's ideas in any very precise and determinate manner. I will only therefore in general observe with respect to the requisite style of these performances, that it consists in a natural ease of expression, an elegant familiarity of phrase, which though formed of the most usual terms of language, has yet a grace and energy, no less striking than that of a more elevated diction. There is a certain lively colouring peculiar to compositions in this way, which, without being so bright and glowing as is necessary for the higher poetry, is nevertheless equally removed from whatever appears harsh and dry. But particular instances will perhaps better illustrate my meaning, than any thing I can farther say to explain it. There is scarce a line in the moral epistles of Mr. Pope, which might not be produced for this purpose. I choose, however to lay before you the following verses, not as preferring them to many others which might be quoted from that inimitable satirist; but as they afford me an opportunity of comparing them with a version of the same original lines, of which they are an imitation; and by that means of shewing you at one view what I conceive is, and is not, in the true manner of Horace:

*Peace is my dear delight,——not Fleury's more;
But touch me, and no minister so sore:
Who'er offends, at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burden of some merry song.*

I will refer you to your own memory for the Latin passage, from whence Mr. Pope has taken the general hint of these verses ; and content myself with adding a translation of the lines from Horace by another hand :

*Behold me blameless bard, how fond of peace !
But he who hurts me (nay, I will be heard)
Had better take a lion by the beard ;
His eyes shall weep the folly of his tongue,
By laughing crouds in rueful ballad sung.*

There is a strength and spirit in the former of these passages, and a flatness and languor in the latter, which cannot fail of being discovered by every reader of the least delicacy of discernment : and yet the words which compose them both, are equally sounding and significant. The rules then, which I just now mentioned from Horace, will point out the real cause of the different effects which these two passages produce in our minds ; as the passages themselves will serve to confirm the truth and justice of the rules. In the lines from Mr. Pope, of the principal beauties will be found to consist in the shortness of the expression ; whereas the sentiments in the other are too much incumbered with words. Thus, for instance,

Peace is my dear delight——

is pleasing, because it is concise ; as

Behold me blameless bard, how fond of peace !

is, in comparison of the former, the *verba lassas ornamenta aures*. Another distinguishing perfection in the imitator of Horace, is that spirit of gaiety which he has diffused through these lines, not to mention those happy, though familiar images of *sliding* into verse and *bitching* in a rhyme ; which can never be sufficiently admired. But the translator, on the contrary, has cast too serious an air over his numbers, and appears with an emotion and earnestness that disappoints the force of his satire :

——Nay,

—*Nay, I will be heard,*

has the mien of a man in a passion ; and

His eyes shall weep the folly of his tongue :

though a good line in itself, is much too solemn and tragical for the undisturbed pleasantry of Horace.

But I need not enter more minutely into an examination of these passages. The general hints I have thrown out in this letter, will suffice to shew you wherein I imagine the true manner of Horace consists. And after all, perhaps, it can no more be explained, than acquired, by rules of art. It is what true genius can only execute, and just taste alone discover. I am, &c.

L E T T E R L X.

To P H I L O T E S.

April 9, 1730.

THERE is no advantage which attends a popular genius that I am so much inclined to envy, as the privilege of rendering merit conspicuous. An author who has raised the attention of the publick to his productions, and gained a whole nation for his audience may be considered as guardian of the temple of fame, and invested with the prerogative of giving entrance to whomsoever he deems worthy of that glorious distinction. But the praise of an ordinary writer, obstructs rather than advances the honour due to merit, and sullies the lustre it means to celebrate. Impotent panegyrick operates like a blight wherever it falls, and injures all that it touches. Accordingly Harry the IV. of France was wont humourously to ascribe his early grey, hairs, to the effect of numberless wretched compliments which were paid him by a certain ridiculous orator of his times. But though the wreaths of folly should not disgrace the temples they surround ; they wither, at least,

least, as soon as received : and if they should not be offensive, most certainly, however, they will be transient. Whereas those on the contrary, with which an Horace or a Boileau, an Addison or a Pope, have crowned the virtues of their contemporaries, are as permanent as they are illustrious, and will preserve their colours and fragrance to remotest ages.

If I could thus weave the garlands of unfading applause ; if I were in the number of those chosen spirits whose approbation is Fame, your friend should not want that distinguishing tribute which his virtues deserve, and you request. I would tell the world (and tell it in a voice that should be heard far and remembered long) that Eusebes, with all the knowledge and experience of these later ages, has all the innocence and simplicity of the earliest : that he enforces the doctrines of his sacred function, not with the vain pomp of ostentatious eloquence, but with the far more powerful persuasion of active and exemplary virtue ; that he softens the severity of precept with the ease and familiarity of conversation, and by generously mingling with the meanest committed to his care, insinuates the instructor under the air of the companion : that whilst he thus fills up the circle of his private station, he still turns his regards to the publick, and employs his genius, his industry, and his fortune, in prosecuting and perfecting those discoveries, which tend most to the general benefit of mankind : in a word, that whilst others of his order are contending for the ambitious prizes of ecclesiastical dignities, it is his glorious pre-eminence to merit the highest, without enjoying, or soliciting even the lowest. This, and yet more than this, the world should hear of your friend, if the world were inclined to listen to my voice. But though you perhaps, Philotes, may be willing to give audience to my Muse,

— namque Tu solebas
Meas esse aliquid putare nugas.

Catul.

can she hope to find favour likewise in the sight of the publick ? Let me then rather content myself with the
silent

silent admiration of those virtues, which I am not worthy to celebrate ; and leave it to others to place the good works of Eusebes where they may *shine forth before men*. I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXI.

To P H I D I P P U S.

TIS well, my friend, that the age of transformation is no more : otherwise I should tremble for your severe attack upon the Muses, and expect to see the story of your metamorphosis embellish the poetical miracles of some modern Ovid. But it is long since the fate of the Pïerides has gained any credit in the world, and you may now, in full security, condemn the divinities of Parnassus, and speak irreverently of the daughters of Jove himself. You see nevertheless, how highly the antients conceived of them, when they represented them as the offspring of the great father of gods and men. You reject, I know, this article of the heathen creed : but I may venture however, to assert, that philosophy will confirm what fable has thus invented, and that the Muses are, in strict truth, of heavenly extraction.

The charms of the fine arts are, indeed, literally derived from the author of all nature, and founded in the original frame and constitution of the human mind. Accordingly, the general principles of *taste* are common to our whole species, and arise from the internal sense of beauty which every man, in some degree at least, evidently possesses. No rational mind can be so wholly void of all perceptions of this sort, as to be contemplating the various objects that surround him, with one equal coldness and indifference. There are certain forms which must necessarily fill the soul with agreeable ideas, and she is instantly determined in her approbation of them, previous to all reasoning concerning their

use and convenience. It is upon these general principles, that what is called fine taste in the arts is founded; and consequently is by no means so precarious and unsettled an idea, as you choose to describe it. The truth is, taste is nothing more than this universal sense of beauty, rendered more exquisite by genius, and more correct by cultivation; and it is from the simple and original ideas of this sort, that the mind learns to form her judgment of the higher and more complex kinds. Accordingly, the whole circle of the imitative and oratorical arts, is governed by the same general rules of criticism; and to prove the certainty of these with respect to any one of them, is to establish their validity with regard to all the rest. I will therefore consider the criterion of taste in relation only to fine writing.

Each species of composition has its distinct perfections: and it would require a much larger compass than a letter affords, to prove their respective beauties to be derived from truth and nature; and consequently reducible to a regular and precise standard. I will only mention therefore those general properties which are essential to them all, and without which they must necessarily be defective in their several kinds. These, I think may be comprehended under uniformity in the design, variety and resemblance in the metaphors and similitudes together with propriety and harmony in the diction. Now some or all of these qualities constantly attend our ideas of beauty, and necessarily raise that agreeable perception of the mind, in what object soever they appear. The charms of fine composition then, are so far from existing only in the heated imagination of an enthusiastick admirer, that they result from the constitution of nature herself. And perhaps the principles of criticism are as certain and indisputable, even as those of the mathematicks. Thus, for instance, that order is preferable to confusion, that harmony is more pleasing than dissonance, with some few other axioms upon which the science is built; are truths, which strike at once upon the mind with the same force of conviction, as that the whole is greater than any of its parts.

or that if from equals you take away equals, the remainder will be equal. And in both cases, the propositions which rest upon these plain and obvious maxims, seem equally capable of the same evidence of demonstration.

But as every intellectual, as well as animal, faculty is improved and strengthened by exercise; the more the soul exerts this her internal sense of beauty upon any particular object, the more she will enlarge and refine her relish of that peculiar species. For this reason the works of those great masters, whose performances have been long and generally admired, supply a farther criterion of fine taste, equally fixed and certain as that which is immediately derived from nature herself. The truth is, fine writing is only the art of raising agreeable sensations of the intellectual kind; and therefore, as by examining those original forms which are adapted to awaken this perception in the mind, we learn what those qualities are which constitute beauty in general; so by observing the peculiar construction of those compositions of genius which have always pleased, we perfect our idea of fine writing in particular. It is this united approbation, in persons of different ages, and of various characters and languages, that Longinus has made the test of the true sublime; and he might with equal justice have extended the same criterion, to all the inferior excellencies of elegant composition. Thus the deference paid to the performances of the great masters of antiquity, is fixed upon just and solid reasons: It is not because Aristotle and Horace have given us the rules of criticism, that we may submit to their authority; it is because those rules are derived from works which have been distinguished by the uninterrupted admiration of all the more improved part of mankind, from their earliest appearance down to this present hour. For whatever, through a long series of ages, has been universally esteemed as beautiful, cannot but be conformable to our just and natural ideas of beauty.

The opposition, however which sometimes divides the opinions of those whose judgments may be supposed equal

equal and perfect, is urged as a powerful objection against the reality of a fixed canon of criticism: it is a proof you think, that after all which can be said of fine taste, it must ultimately be resolved into the peculiar relish of each individual. But this diversity of sentiments will not, of itself, destroy the evidence of the criterion; since the same effect may be produced by numberless other causes. A thousand accidental circumstances may concur in counteracting the force of the rule, even allowing it to be ever so fixed and invariable, when left in its free and uninfluenced state. Not to mention that false bias which party or personal dislikes may fix upon the mind, the most unprejudiced critick will find it difficult to disengage himself entirely from those partial affections in favour of particular beauties, to which either the general course of his studies, or the peculiar cast of his temper, may have rendered him most sensible. But as perfection in any work of genius results from the united beauty and propriety of its several distinct parts, and as it is impossible that any human composition should possess all those qualities in their highest and most sovereign degree; the mind, when she pronounceth judgment upon any piece of this sort, is apt to decide of its merit, as those circumstances, which she most admires either prevail or are deficient. Thus for instance, the excellency of the Roman masters in painting, consists in beauty of design, nobleness of attitude, and delicacy of expression; but the charms of good colouring are wanting. On the contrary the Venetian school is said to have neglected design a little too much; but at the same time has been more attentive to the grace and harmony of well-disposed lights and shades. Now it will be admitted by all admirers of this noble art, that no composition of the pencil can be perfect where either of these qualities are absent; yet the most accomplished judge may be so particularly struck with one or other of these excellencies, in preference to the rest, as to be influenced in his censure or applause of the whole tablatore, by the predominancy or deficiency of his favourite beauty. Something of this kind (where the meaner prejudices do
not

not operate) is ever, I am persuaded, the occasion of that diversity of sentences which we occasionally hear pronounced by the most improved judges, on the same piece. But this only shews, that much caution is necessary to give a fine taste its full and unobstructed effect; not that it is in itself uncertain and precarious. I am, &c.

LETTER LXII.

To ORONTES.

March 10, 1718.

WHAT haughty Sacharissa has put you out of humour with her whole sex? for it is some disappointment, I suspect, of the tender kind, that has thus sharpened the edge of your satire, and pointed its invective against the fairer half of our species. You were not mistaken, however, when you supposed I should prove no convert to your doctrine; but rise up as an advocate where I profess myself an admirer. I am not, it is true, altogether of old Montaigne's opinion, that the souls of both sexes *sont jettex* (as he expresses it) *en mesme moule*: on the contrary, I am willing enough to join with you in thinking, that they may be wrought off from different models. Yet the *casts* may be equally perfect, though it should be allowed that they are essentially different. Nature, it is certain, has traced out a separate course of action for the two sexes; and as they are appointed to distinct offices of life, it is not improbable that there may be something distinct likewise in the frame of their minds; that there may be a kind of sex in the very soul.

I cannot, therefore, but wonder, that Plato should have thought it reasonable to admit them into an equal share of the dignities and offices of his imaginary commonwealth; and that the wisdom of the antient Egyptians should have so strangely inverted the evident intentions

tions of providence, as to confine the men to domestick affairs, whilst the women, it is said, were engaged in the active and laborious scenes of business. History, it must be owned, will supply some few female instances of all the more masculine virtues : But appearances of that extraordinary kind are too uncommon, to support the notion of a general equality in the natural powers of their minds.

Thus much, however, seems evident, that there are certain moral boundaries which nature has drawn between the two sexes, and that neither of them can pass over the limits of the other, without equally deviating from the beauty and decorum of their respective characters : Boadicea in armour, is, to me at least, as extravagant a sight, as Achilles in petticoats.

In determining therefore the comparative merit of the two sexes, it is no derogation from female excellency, that it differs in kind from that which distinguishes the male part of our species. And if in general it should be found (what, upon an impartial enquiry, I believe, will most certainly be found) that women fill up their appointed circle of action with greater regularity and dignity than men ; the claim of preference cannot justly be decided in our favour. In the prudential and economical parts of life, I think it undeniable that they rise far above us. And if true fortitude of mind, is best discovered by a cheerful resignation to the measures of providence, we shall not find reason, perhaps, to claim that most singular of the human virtues as our peculiar privilege. There are numbers of the other sex, who, from the natural delicacy of their constitution, pass through one continued scene of suffering from their cradles to their graves, with a firmness of resolution that would deserve so many statues to be erected to their memories, if heroism were not estimated more by the splendour than the merit of actions.

But whatever real difference there may be between the moral or intellectual powers of the male and female mind ; nature does not seem to have marked the distinction so strongly as our vanity is willing to imagine:
and

and after all, perhaps, education will be found to constitute the principal superiority. It must be acknowledged, at least, that in this article we have every advantage over the softer sex, that art and industry can possibly secure to us. The most animating examples of Greece and Rome are set before us, as early as we are capable of any observation; and the noblest compositions of the antients are given into our hands, almost as soon as we have strength to hold them: while the employments of the other sex, at the same period of life, are generally the reverse of every thing that can open and enlarge their minds, or fill them with just and rational notions. The truth of it is, female education is so much worse than none, as it is better to leave the mind to its natural and uninstructed suggestions, than to lead it into false pursuits, and contract its views, by turning them upon the lowest and most trifling objects. We seem indeed by the manner in which we suffer the youth of that sex to be trained, to consider women agreeably to the opinion of certain Mahometan doctors, and treat them as if we believed they have no souls: why else are they

*Bred only and compleated to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and trouble the tongue, and roll the eye?*

MILT.

This strange neglect of cultivating the female mind, can hardly be allowed as good policy, when it is considered how much the interest of society is concerned in the rectitude of their understandings. That season of every man's life which is most susceptible of the strongest impressions, is necessarily under female direction: as there are few instances, perhaps, in which that sex is not one of the secret springs which regulates the most important movements of private or publick transactions. What Cato observes of his countrymen, is in one respect true of every nation under the sun: "the Romans," said he, govern the world, but it is the women that
" govern

“ govern the Romans.” Let not however, a certain pretended Cato of your acquaintance, take occasion from this maxim to *insult* a second time that *innocence* he has so often *injured*: for I will tell him another maxim as true as the former, that “ there are *circumstances* — “ wherein a woman has power enough to controul a “ man of spirit.”

If it be true then (as true beyond all peradventure it is) that female influence is thus extensive; nothing, certainly, can be of more importance, than to give it a proper tendency, by the assistance of a well-directed education. Far am I from recommending any attempts to render women learned; yet surely it is necessary they should be raised above ignorance. Such a general tincture of the most useful sciences as may serve to free the mind from vulgar prejudices, and give it a relish for the rational exercise of its powers, might very justly enter into the plan of female erudition. That sex might be taught to turn the course of their reflexions into a proper and advantageous channel, without any danger of rendering them too elevated for the feminine duties of life. In a word, I would have them considered as designed by Providence for use as well as shew, and trained up, not only as women, but as rational creatures. Adieu. I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXIII.

To PHILOTES.

Dec. 7, 1727.

THE visits of a friend, like those of the sun at this season, are extremely enlivening. I am sure at least they would both be particularly acceptable to me at present, when my mind is as much overcast as the heavens. I hope, therefore, you will not drop the design your letter intimates, of spending a few days with me in your way to * * *. Your company will greatly contribute to disperse those clouds of melancholy, which the loss of a very valuable friend has hung over me.

me. There is something, indeed, in the first moments of separation from those, whom a daily commerce and long habitude of friendship has grafted upon the heart, that disorders our whole frame of thought, and discolors all one's enjoyments. Let philosophy assist with the utmost of her vaunted strength, the mind cannot immediately recover the firmness of its posture when those amicable props upon which it used to rest, are totally removed. Even the most indifferent objects with which we have long been familiar, take some kind of root in our hearts; and "I should hardly care (as a celebrated author has, with great good nature observed) to have an old post pulled up, which I remember ever since I was a child."

To know how to receive the full satisfaction of a present enjoyment, with, a disposition prepared at the same time to yield it up without reluctance, is hardly, I doubt, reconcilable to humanity: pain in being disunited from those we love, is a tax we must be contented to pay, if we would enjoy the pleasures of the social affections. One would not wish, indeed, to be wholly insensible to disquietudes of this kind; and we must renounce the most refined relish of our being, if we would upon all occasions possess our soul in a Stoical tranquillity.

That antient philosopher, whose precept it was, to converse with our friends as if they might one day prove our enemies; has been justly censured as advancing a very ungenerous maxim. To remember, however, that we must one day most certainly be divided from them, is a reflection, methinks, that should enter with us into all our tender connections of every kind. From the present discomposure, therefore, of my own breast, and from that share which I take in whatever may affect the repose of yours, I cannot bid you adieu, without reminding you at the same time of the useful caution of one of your poetical acquaintance:

Quicquid amas, cupias non placuisse nimis.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

To EUPHRONIUS.

July 2, 1722.

IT is a pretty observation, which I have some where met, that "the most pleasing of all harmony arises from the censure of a single person, when mixed with the general applauses of the world." I almost suspect, therefore, that you are considering the interest of your admired author, when you call upon me for my farther objections to his performance; and are for joining me, perhaps, to the number of those who advance his reputation, by opposing it. The truth, however, is, you could not have chosen a critick (if a critick I might venture to call myself) who has a higher esteem for all the compositions of Mr. Pope; as indeed I look upon every thing that comes from his hands, with the same degree of veneration as if it were consecrated by antiquity. Nevertheless, though I greatly revere his judgment, I cannot absolutely renounce my own; and since some have been bold enough to advance, that the sacred writings themselves do not always speak the language of the Spirit; I may have leave to suspect of the poets what has been asserted of the prophets, and suppose that their pens are not, at all seasons, under the guidance of inspiration. But as there is something extremely ungrateful to the mind, in dwelling upon those little spots that necessarily attend the lustre of human merit; you must allow me to join his beauties with his imperfections, and admire with rapture after having condemned with regret.

There is a certain modern figure of speech, which the authors of *The art of sinking in poetry* have called the *diminishing*. This, so far as it relates to words only, consists in debasing a great idea, by expressing it in a term of meaner import. Mr. Pope has himself now and then fallen into this kind of the *profound*, which he has with such uncommon wit and spirit exposed in the writings

writings of others. Thus Agamemnon, addressing himself to Menelaus and Ulysses, asks,

*And can you, chiefs, without a blush survey
Whole troops before you lab'ring in the fray?* B. IV.

So likewise Pandarus, speaking of Diomed, who is performing the utmost efforts of heroism in the field of battle, says,

— *some guardian of the skies,
Involv'd in clouds, protects him in the—fray.* V. 235.

But what would you think, Euphronius, were you to hear of the “ impervious foam” and “ rough waves of a brook?” would it not put you in mind of that drole thought of the ingenious Dr. Young, in one of his Epistles to our author, where he talks of a puddle in a storm? yet by thus confounding the properties of the highest objects with those of the lowest, Mr. Pope has turned one of the most pleasing similes in the whole Iliad, into downright burlesque :

*As when some simple swain his cat forsakes,
And wide thro' fens an unknown journey takes ;
If chance a swelling brook his passage stay,
And foam impervious crosses the wanderer's way,
Confus'd he stops, a length of country past,
Eyes the rough waves, and tir'd, returns at last.*

V. 734.

This swelling brook, however, of Mr. Pope, is in Homer a rapid river, rushing with violence into the sea :

Στην ἐπ' ἀκνέωσιν ἀλάδῃς πορροσσι. V. 598.

It is one of the essential requisites of an epick poem, and indeed of every other kind of serious poetry, that the style be raised above common language; as nothing takes off so much from the solemnity of diction, from which the poet ought never to depart, as idioms of a vulgar

vulgar and familiar cast. Mr. Pope has sometimes neglected this important rule; but most frequently in the introduction of his speeches. To mention only a few instances

That done, to *Phœnix Ajax gave the sign.* IX. 291.

With that *stern Ajax his long silence broke.* IX. 735.

With that *the venerable warrior rose.* X. 150.

With that they step'd aside, &c.—— X. 415.

Whereas Homer generally prefaces his speeches with a dignity of phrase, that calls up the attention of the reader to what is going to be uttered. Milton has very happily copied his manner in this particular, as well as in many others; and though he often falls into a flatness of expression, he has never once, I think, committed that error upon occasions of this kind. He usually ushers in his harangues with something characteristic of the speaker, or that points out some remarkable circumstance of his present situation, in the following manner:

——— *Satan, with bold words*
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began. I. 82.

——— *him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer. &c.* I. 125.

He ended frowning———
on the other side uprose

Belial———
And with persuasive accents thus began. I. 106.

If you compare the effect which an introduction of this descriptive sort has upon the mind, with those low and unawakening expressions, which I have marked in the lines I just now quoted from our English Iliad; you will not perhaps, consider my objection as altogether without foundation.

All opposition of ideas should be carefully avoided in a poem of this kind, as unbecoming the gravity of the heroick Muse. But does not Mr. Pope sometimes sacrifice simplicity to false ornament, and lose the majesty of Homer in the affectations of Ovid? Of this sort a severe critick would, perhaps, esteem his calling an army marching with spears erect, a *moving iron wood*:

*Such and so thick th'embattel'd squadrons flood
With spears erect, a moving iron wood.*

There seems also to be an inconsistency in the two parts of this description; for the troops are represented as standing still, at the same time that the circumstance mentioned of the spears, should rather imply (as indeed the truth is) that they were in motion. But if the translator had been faithful to his author in this passage, neither of those objections could have been raised: for in Homer it is,

Τοιαί —

— πυκνὰι κινούσθαι φάλαγγες

Κυανταί, σάκισσι τε καὶ ἰγκασσιν ἀμφερύκται. IV. 280.

Is there not likewise some little tendency to a pun, in those upbraiding lines which Hector addresses to Paris?

*For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,
Till heaps of dead alone defend the wall.*

Mr. Pope at least deserts his guide, in order to give us this conceit of dead men *defending* a town; for the original could not possibly lead him into it, Homer, with a plainness suitable to the occasion, only tells us,

Λαοὶ μὲν φθινυθῶσι περὶ πόλιν, αἵπυ τε τειχός,

Μαγαραμένοιοι —

VI. 327.

Teucer, in the eighth book, aims a dart at Hector, which, missing its way, slew Gorythio; upon which we are told,

Another

*Another shaft the raging archer threw ;
 That other shaft with erring fury flew.
 (From Hector Phæbus turn'd the flying wound)
 Yet fell not dry or guiltless to the ground.*

A *flying wound* is a thought exactly in the spirit of Ovid ; but highly unworthy of Pope as well as of Homer : and indeed there is not the least foundation for it in the original. But what do you think of the shaft that fell *dry or guiltless* ? where, you see, one figurative epithet is added as explanatory of the other. The doubling of epithets, without raising the idea, is not allowable in compositions of any kind ; but least of all in poetry. It is, says Quintilian, as if every common soldier in an army were to be attended with a valet ; you encrease your number without adding to your strength.

But if it be a fault to croud epithets of the same import one upon the other ; it is much more so to employ such as call off the attention from the principal idea to be raised, and turn it upon little or foreign circumstances. When Æneas is wounded by Tydides, Homer describes Venus as conducting him through the thickest tumult of the enemy, and conveying him from the field of battle. But while we are following the hero with our whole concern, and trembling for the danger which surrounds him on all sides ; Mr. Pope leads us off from our anxiety for Æneas, by an uninteresting epithet relating to the structure of those instruments of death, which were every where flying about him ; and we are coldly informed, that the darts were *feathered* :

*Safe thro' the rushing horse and feathered flight
 Of sounding shafts, she bears him thro' the fight.*

V. 393.

But as Mr. Pope's epithets sometimes debase the general image to be raised ; so they now and then adorn them with a false brilliancy. Thus, speaking of a person slain by an arrow, he calls it a *pointed death*,

IV. 607.

IV. 607. describing another who was attacked by numbers at once, he tells us,

A grove of lances glitter'd at his breast. IV. 621.

and representing a forest on fire, he says,

*In blazing heaps the grove's old honors fall,
And one refulgent ruin levels all.* X. 201.

But one of the most unpardonable instances of this kind is where he relates the death of Hypsenor, a person, who, it seems, exercised the sacerdotal office :

*On his broad shoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopp'd his holy hand,
And stain'd with sacred blood the blushing sand.* }

To take the force of this epithet, we must suppose that the redness which appeared upon the sand on this occasion, was an effect of its blushing to find itself stained with the blood of so sacred a person : than which there can be no more forced and unnatural thought. It puts me in mind of a passage in a French dramatick writer, who has formed a play upon the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. The hapless maid, addressing herself to the dagger which lies by the side of her lover, breaks out into the following exclamation :

*Ab ! voici le poignard qui du sang du son maitre
S'est souillé lachement : il en rougit le traitre.*

Boileau, taking notice of these lines, observes, *toutes les glaces du Nord ensemble ne sont pas, à mon sens, plus froides que cette pensée.* But of the two poets, I know not whether Mr. Pope is not most to be condemned : for whatever shame the poignard might take to itself, for being concerned in the murder of the lover ; it is certain that the sand had not the least share in the death of the priest.

The

The antient criticks have insisted much upon propriety of language ; and, indeed, one may with great justice say, what the insulted Job does to his impertinent friends, *how forcible are right words !* The truth is, though the sentiment must always support the expression, yet the expression must give grace and efficacy to the sentiment ; and the same thought shall frequently be admired or condemned, according to the merit of the particular phrase in which it is conveyed. For this reason, J. Cæsar, in a treatise which he wrote concerning the Latin language, calls a judicious choice of words, *the origin of eloquence* ; as indeed neither oratory nor poetry can be raised to any degree of perfection, where this their principal root is neglected. In this art Virgil particularly excels ; and it is in the inimitable grace of his words, (as Mr. Dryden somewhere justly observes) wherein that beauty principally consists, which gives so inexpressible a pleasure to him, who best understands their force. No man was ever a more skillful master of this powerful art, than Mr. Pope ; as he has upon several occasions throughout this translation, raised and dignified his style with certain antiquated words and phrases, that are most wonderfully solemn and majestic. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning an instance, where he has employed an obsolete term less happily, I think, than is his general custom. It occurs in some lines which I just now quoted for another purpose :

*On his broad shoulder fell, the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopp'd his holy hand.*

V. 105.

Brand is sometimes used by Spenser for a sword ; and in that sense it is here introduced. But as we still retain this word in a different application, it will always be improper to adopt it in its antiquated meaning, because it must necessarily occasion ambiguity : an error in style of all others the most to be avoided. Accordingly every reader of the lines I have quoted, must necessarily take up an idea very different from that which

which the poet intends, and which he will carry on with him, till he arrives at the middle of the second verse. And if he happens to be unacquainted with the language of our old writers, when he comes to

—lopp'd his sacred band,

he will be lost in a confusion of images, and have absolutely no idea remaining.

There is another uncommon elegance in the management of words, which requires a very singular turn of genius, and great delicacy of judgment to attain. As the art I just before mentioned turns upon employing antiquated words with force and propriety; so this consists in giving the grace of novelty to the received and current terms of language, by applying them in a new and unexpected manner:

Dixeris egregie notum si callida verbum

Reddiderit junctura novum. —

Horat.

The great caution, however, to be observed in any attempt of this kind, is to judiciously to connect the expressions, as to remove every doubt concerning the signification in which they are designed: for as perspicuity is the end and supreme excellency of writing, there cannot be a more fatal objection to an author's style, than that it stands in need of a commentator. But will not this objection lie against the following verse?

Next artful Phereclus untimely fell.

V. 75.

The word *artful* is here taken out of its appropriated acceptation, in order to express

ος χερσιν επιγαλο δαιδαλα παλαια

ΤΙΟΥΧΙΩ.

But however allowable it may be (as indeed it is not only allowable but graceful) to raise a word above its ordinary import, when the *callida junctura* (as Horace) Vol. II. D cal's

calls it) determines at once the sense in which it is used; yet it should never be cast so far back from its customary meaning, as to stand for an idea which has no relation to what it implies, in its primary and natural state. This would be introducing uncertainty and confusion into a language; and turning every sentence into a riddle. Accordingly, after we have travelled on through the several succeeding lines in this passage, we are obliged to change the idea with which we set out; and find at last, that by the *artful* Phereclus we are to understand, not, what we at first apprehended, a man of cunning and design; but one who is skilled in the mechanical arts.

It is with a liberty of the same unsuccessful kind, that Mr. Pope has rendered

Τον πρώτιστος προσηύκε Λυκαόνος ἀγλαός υἱος, V. 276.
Stern Lycaon's warlike race begun.

I know not by what figure of speech, the whole race of a man can denote his next immediate descendant; and I fear, no synecdoche can acquit this expression of nonsense. The truth is, whoever ventures to strike out in the common road, must be more than ordinary careful, or he will probably lose his way.

This reminds me of a passage or two, where our poet has been extremely injurious to the sense of his author, and made him talk a language which he never uses; the language, I mean, of absurdity. In the sixth Iliad, Agamemnon, assures Menelaus,

Ἰλίω εξαπολοίατ', ἀκηδεῖοι, ——— πανίης VI. 60.
But in Mr. Pope's version, that chief tells his brother,
Ilion shall perish whole and bury all.

Perhaps it may be over nice to remark, that as the destruction of Troy is first mentioned, it has a little the appearance of nonsense to talk afterwards of her burying her sons. However, the latter part of this verse direct-

directly contradicts the original : for Agamemnon is so far from asserting, that Ilion should bury all her inhabitants, that he pronounces positively, they should not be buried at all : a calamity, in the opinion of the ancients, of all others the most terrible. But possibly the error may lie in the printer, not in the poet ; and perhaps the line originally stood thus :

Ilion shall perish whole, unbury'd all.

If so, both my objections vanish : and those who are conversant with the press, will not think this supposition improbable : since much more unlikely mistakes often happen, by the carelessness of compositors.

But though I am willing to make all the allowance possible to an author, who raises our admiration too often not to have a right to the utmost candour, wherever he fails ; yet I can find no excuse for an unaccountable absurdity he has fallen into, in translating a passage of the tenth book. Diomed and Ulysses taking advantage of the night, set out in order to view the Trojan camp. In their way they meet with Dolon, who is going from thence to the Grecian, upon an errand of the same kind. After having seized this unfortunate adventurer, and examined him concerning the situation and designs of the enemy ; Diomed draws his sword, and strikes off Dolon's head, in the very instant that he is supplicating for mercy :

Φθγγόμενος δ' ἀγα τῷ γέ κεν κούρησιν ἐμύχθη. X. 457.

Mr. Pope has turned this into a most extraordinary miracle, by assuring us that the head spoke after it had quitted the body :

The head yet speaking, mutter'd as it fell.

This puts me in mind of a wonder of the same kind in the *Fairy Queen*, where Corflambo is represented as blaspheming, after his head had been struck off by prince Arthur :

*He smote at him with all his might and main
So furiously, that e're he wist, he found
His head before him tumbling on the ground,
The whiles his babbling tongue did yet blaspheme,
And curse his God, that did him so confound.*

Book IV. 8.

But Corflambo was the son of a giantess, and could conquer whole kingdoms by only looking at them. We may, perhaps, therefore allow him to talk, when every other man must be silent : whereas there is nothing in the history of poor Dolon, that can give him the least pretence to this singular privilege. The truth is, Mr. Pope seems to have been led into this blunder by Scaliger, who has given the same sense to the verse, and then with great wisdom and gravity observes, *salsum est a pulmone caput avulsum loqui posse.*

The most pleasing picture in the whole Iliad, is, I think, the parting of Hector and Andromache : and Mr. Pope has, in general, very successfully copied it. But in some places he seems not to have touched it with that delicacy of pencil, which graces the original : as he has entirely lost the beauty of one of the figures. Hector is represented as extending his arms to embrace the little Astyanax, who being terrified with the unusual appearance of a man in armour, throws himself back upon his nurse's breast, and falls into tears. But though the Hero and his son were designed to draw our principal attention, Homer intended likewise that we should cast a glance towards the nurse. Accordingly, he does not mark her out merely by the name of her office ; but adds an epithet to shew that she makes no inconsiderable figure in the piece : He does not simply call her *τιθνηη*, but *εὐζωνος τιθνηη*. This circumstance Mr. Pope has entirely overlooked :

Ὡς εἰπὼν, ἡ παῖδος ὀρεξάλο φαίδιμος Ἑκτωρ.
Αψ' δ' ὁ παῖς πρὸς κόλπον εὐζωνοῖο τιθνηῆς
Ἐκλιθεῖς ἰαχὼν, πάρος φίλῃ ὦψιν αὐτοχθεις,
Ταρεθσας χαλκὸν τι, ἰδὲ λοφὸν ἱππιοχαιτην,

Διμή

Δεινον ἀπ' ἀρεοτατης κορυθος νευοντα νοησας·
 Εκ δ' ἐγλασσει παῖνα τε φίλος, καὶ πόσινα μῆτηρ·
 Αὐλὴν ἀπο κρατος κορυθ' εἰλετο φαιδιμος Ἐκλως,
 Καὶ τὴν μιν καλεθηκαν ἐπὶ χθονι παμφανωσαν.

VI. 466.

*Thus having said, th' illustrious chief of Troy
 Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy;
 The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
 Scar'd by the dazzling helm and nodding crest:
 With secret pleasure each fond parent smil'd,
 And Hector hasted to relieve his child:
 The glittering terrors from his head unbound,
 And plac'd the beaming helmet on the ground.*

I was going to object to the *glittering terrors*, in the last line but one: but I have already taken notice of these little affected expressions, where the substantive is set at variance with its attribute.

It is the observation of Quintilian, that no poet ever excelled Homer in the sublimity with which he treats great subjects, or in the delicacy and propriety he always discovers in the management of small ones. There is a passage in the ninth Iliad, which will justify the truth of the latter of these observations. When Achilles receives Ajax and Ulysses in his tent, who were sent to him in the name of Agamemnon, in order to prevail with him to return to the army; Homer gives a very minute account of the entertainment, which was prepared for them upon that occasion. It is impossible, perhaps, in modern language to preserve the same dignity in descriptions of this kind, which so considerably raises the original: and indeed Mr. Pope warns his readers not to expect much beauty in the picture. However, a translator should be careful not to throw in any additional circumstances, which may lower and debase the piece; which yet Mr. Pope has, in his version of the following line:

Πυρ Μενοισιάδης δαῖεν μέγα, ἰσοθεος φως.

Mean while Patroclus sweats the fire to raise.

D 3

OWN

Own the truth, Euphronius: does not this give you the idea of a greasy cook at a kitchen fire? Whereas nothing of this kind is suggested in the original. On the contrary, the epithet ~~rough~~ seems to have been added by Homer, in order to reconcile us to the meanness of the action, by reminding us of the high character of the person who is engaged in it: and as Mr. Addison observes of Virgil's husbandman, that "he tosses about his dung with an air of gracefulness;" one may with the same truth say of Homer's hero, that he lights his fire with an air of dignity.

I intended to have closed these hasty objections, with laying before you some of those passages, where Mr. Pope seems to have equalled, or excelled his original. But I perceive I have already extended my letter beyond a reasonable limit: I will reserve therefore that more pleasing, as well as much easier, task to some future occasion. In the mean time, I desire you will look upon these remarks, not as proceeding from a spirit of cavil, (than which I know not any more truly contemptible) but as an instance of my having read your favourite poet with that attention, which his own unequalled merit and your judicious recommendation most deservedly claim. I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXV.

T, PALAMÉDES.

April 18, 1729.

I Have had occasion a thousand times since I saw you to wish myself *in the land where all things are forgotten*; at least, that I did not live in the memory of certain restless mortals of your acquaintance, who are visitors by profession. The misfortune is, no retirement is so remote, nor sanctuary so sacred, as to afford a protection from their impertinence; and though one were to fly to the desert, and take refuge in the
cells

cells of saints and hermits, one should be alarmed with their unmeaning *voice*, *crying even in the wilderness*. They spread themselves, in truth, over the whole face of the land, and lay waste the fairest hours of conversation. For my own part (to speak of them in a style suitable to their taste and talents) I look upon them, not as paying visits, but *visitations*; and am never obliged to give audience to one of this species, that I do not consider myself as under a judgment for those numberless hours, which I have spent in vain. If these sons and daughters of idleness and folly would be persuaded to enter into an exclusive society among themselves, the rest of the world might possess their moments unmolested: but nothing less will satisfy them than opening a general commerce, and sailing into every port where choice or chance may drive them. Were we to live, indeed, to the years of the antediluvians, one might afford to resign some part of one's own time, in charitable relief of the insufferable weight of theirs; but since the days of man are shrunk into a few hasty revolutions of the sun, whole afternoons are much too considerable a sacrifice to be offered up to tame civility. What heightens the contempt of this character, is, that they who have so much of the form, have always least of the power of friendship: and though they will *craze their chariot wheels* (as Milton expresses it) to destroy your repose; they would not drive half the length of a street to assist your distress.

It was owing to an interruption from one of these obsequious intruders, that I was prevented keeping my engagement with you yesterday; and you must indulge me in this discharge of my invective against the ridiculous occasion of so mortifying a disappointment. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXVI.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 10, 1718.

YOU who never forget any thing, can tell me, I dare say, whose observation it is, that “of all the actions of our life nothing is more uncommon, than to laugh or cry with a good grace.” But though I cannot recollect the author, I shall always retain his maxim; as, indeed, every day’s occurrences suggest the truth of it to my mind. I had particularly an occasion to see one part of it verified in the treatise I herewith return you; for, never surely, was mirth more injudiciously directed, than that which this writer of your acquaintance hath employed. To drole upon the established religion of a country, and laugh at the most sacred and inviolable of her ordinances, is as far removed from good politicks, as it is from good manners. It is indeed upon maxims of policy alone, that one can reason with those who pursue the principles, which this author has embraced: I will add therefore (since it seems, you sometimes communicate to him my letters) that to endeavour to lessen that veneration which is due to the religious institutions of a nation, when they neither run counter to any of the great lines of morality, nor oppose the natural rights of mankind, is a sort of zeal which I know not by what epithet sufficiently to stigmatize: It is attacking the strongest hold of society, and attempting to destroy the firmest guard of human security. Far am I, indeed, from thinking there is no other; or that the notion of a moral sense is a vain and groundless hypothesis. But wonderfully limited must the experience of those philosophers, undoubtedly, be, who imagine, that an implanted love of virtue is sufficient to conduct the generality of mankind through the paths of moral duties, and supersede the necessity of a farther and more powerful guide. A sense of honour, likewise, where it

operates

operates in its true and genuine vigour, is, I confess, a most noble and powerful principle ; but far too refined a motive of action, even for the more cultivated part of our species to adopt in general : and, in fact, we find it much oftner professed than pursued. Nor are the laws of a community sufficient to answer all the restraining purposes of government ; as there are many moral points which it is impossible to secure by express provisions. Human institutions can reach no farther than to certain general duties, in which the collective welfare of society is more particularly concerned. Whatever else is necessary for the ease and happiness of social intercourse, can be derived only from the assistance of religion ; which influences the nicer connections and dependancies of mankind, as it regulates and corrects the heart. How many tyrannies may I exercise as a parent, how many hardships may I inflict as a master, if I take the statutes of my country for the only guides of my actions, and think every thing lawful that is not immediately penal ? The truth is, a man may be injured in a variety of instances far more atrociously, than by what the law considers either as a fraud or a robbery. Now in cases of this kind (and many very important cases of this kind there are) to remove the bars of religion, is to throw open the gates of oppression : It is to leave the honest, exposed to the injurious inroads of those (and they are far, perhaps, the greatest part of mankind) who, though they would never *do justice and love mercy*, in compliance with the dictates of nature ; would scrupulously practise both in obedience to the rules of revelation.

The gross of our species can never, indeed, be influenced by abstract reasoning, nor captivated by the naked charms of virtue : on the contrary, nothing seems more evident than that the generality of mankind must be wrought upon by their hopes and fears. And this has been the constant maxim of all the celebrated legislators, from the earliest establishment of government, to this present hour. It is true indeed, that none have contended more warmly than the antients.

tients for the dignity of human nature, and the native disposition of the soul to be enamoured with the beauty of virtue: but it is equally true, that none have more strenuously inculcated the expediency of adding the authority of religion to the suggestions of nature, and maintaining a reverence to the appointed ceremonies of publick worship. The sentiments of Pythagoras (or whoever he be who was author of those verses which pass under that philosopher's name) are well known upon this subject:

Ἀθανάτους μιν πρῶτον θεοῖς, ἵστανται ὡς διακίπται,
Τίμα. —————

Many indeed are the antient passages which might be produced in support of this assertion, if it were necessary to produce any passages of this kind to you, whom I have often heard contend for the same truth with all the awakening powers of learning and eloquence. Suffer me, however, for the benefit of your acquaintance, to remind you of one or two, which I do not remember ever to have seen quoted.

Livy has recorded a speech of Ap. Claudius Crassus, which he made in opposition to certain demands of the tribunes. That zealous senator warmly argues against admitting the plebeians into a share of the consular dignity; from the power of taking the auspices being originally and solely vested in the patrician order. "But perhaps, says Crassus, I shall be told that the picking of a chicken, &c. are trifles unworthy of regard: trifling however, as these ceremonies may now be deemed, it was by the strict observance of them, that our ancestors raised this commonwealth to the present point of grandeur." *Parva sunt hæc sed parva ista non contemnenda, majores nostri maximam hanc rem fecerunt.* Agreeably to this principle, the Roman historian of the life of Alexander, describes that monarch, after having killed his friend Clitus, as considering in his cool moments, whether the gods had not permitted him to be guilty of that horrid act,

in

in punishment for his irreligious neglect of their sacred rites. And Juvenal * imputes the source of that torrent of vice which broke in upon the age in which he wrote, to the general disbelief that prevailed, of the publick doctrines of their established religion. Those tenets, he tells us, that influenced the glorious conduct of the Curii, the Scipio's, the Fabricii, and the Camilli, were, in his days, so totally exploded as, scarce to be received even by children. It were well for some parts of the christian world, if the same observation might not with justice be extended beyond the limits of antient Rome : And I often reflect upon the very judicious remark of a great writer of the last century, who takes notice, that " the generality of Christendom is now well nigh arrived at that fatal condition, which immediately preceded the destruction of the worship of the antient world ; when the face of religion in their publick assemblies, was quite different from that apprehension which men had concerning it in private."

Nothing, most certainly, could less plead the sanction of reason, than the general rites of pagan worship. Weak and absurd, however, as they were in themselves, and indeed in the estimation too of all the wiser sort ; yet the more thinking and judicious part, both of their statesmen and philosophers, unanimously concurred in supporting them as sacred and inviolable : well persuaded, no doubt, that religion is the strongest cement in the great structure of moral government. Farewell. I am, &c.

L E T T E R L X V I I.

To E U P H R O N I U S

I HAVE read the performance you communicated to me, with all the attention you required ; and I can
with

* Sat. II. 149.

with strict sincerity apply to your friend's verses, what an antient has observed of the same number of Spartans who defended the passage of Thermopylæ; *nunquam vidi plures trecentos* ! Never, indeed, was there greater energy of language and sentiment united together in the same compass of lines : and it would be an injustice to the world, as well as to himself, to suppress so animated and so useful a composition.

A satirist of true genius, who is warmed by a generous indignation of vice, and whose censures are conducted by candour, and truth, merits the applause of every friend to virtue. He may be considered as a sort of supplement to the legislative authority of his country; as assisting the unavoidable defects of all legal institutions for regulating of manners, and striking terror even where the divine prohibitions themselves are held in contempt. The strongest defence, perhaps, against the inroads of vice, among the more cultivated part of our species, is well-directed ridicule : They who fear nothing else, dread to be marked out to the contempt and indignation of the world. There is no succeeding in the secret purposes of dishonesty, without preserving some sort of credit among mankind ; as there cannot exist a more impotent creature than a knave convict. To expose therefore, the false pretensions of counterfeit virtue, is to disarm it at once of all power of mischief, and to perform a publick service of the most advantageous kind, in which, any man can employ his time and his talents. The voice, indeed, is not only beneficial to the world, as giving an alarm against the designs of an enemy so dangerous to all social intercourse ; but as proving likewise the most efficacious preventive to others, of assuming the same character of distinguished infamy. Few are so totally vitiated, as to have abandoned all sentiments of shame; and when every other principle of integrity is surrendered, we generally find the conflict is still maintained in this last post of retreating virtue. In this view therefore, it should seem, the function of a satirist may be justified, notwithstanding it should be true (what an
excellent

excellent moralist has asserted) that his chastisements rather exasperate, than reclaim those on whom they fall. Perhaps, no human penalties are of any moral advantage to the criminal himself; and the principal benefit that seems to be derived from civil punishments of any kind, is their restraining influence upon the conduct of others.

It is not every arm, however, that is qualified to manage this formidable bow. The arrows of satire, when they are not pointed by virtue, as well as wit, recoil back upon the hand that directs them, and wound none but him from whom they proceed. Accordingly, Horace rests the whole success of writings of this sort, upon the poet's being *Integer Ipse*; free himself from those immoral stains which he points out in others. There cannot indeed, be a more odious, nor at the same time a more contemptible character than that of a vitious satirist:

*Quis cælum terris non misceat et mare cælo,
Si fur displiceat Verri, homicida Miloni?*

Juv.

The most favourable light in which a censor of this species could possibly be viewed, would be that of a publick executioner, who inflicts the punishment on others, which he has already merited himself. But the truth of it is, he is not qualified even for so wretched an office; and there is nothing to be dreaded from a satirist of known dishonesty, but his applause. Adieu.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

To PALAMÉDES.

Aug. 2, 1724.

CEREMONY is never more unwelcome, than at that season in which you will probably have the greatest share of it; and as I should be extremely unwilling

unwilling to add to the number of those who, in pure good manners, may interrupt your enjoyments, I choose to give you my congratulations a little prematurely. After the happy office shall be completed, your moments will be too valuable to be laid out in forms; and it would be paying a compliment with a very ill grace, to draw off your eyes from the highest beauty, though it were to turn them on the most exquisite wit. I hope, however, you will give me timely notice of your wedding day, that I may be prepared with my epithalamium. I have already laid in half a dozen deities extremely proper for the occasion, and have even made some progress in my first simile. But I am somewhat at a loss how to proceed, not being able to determine whether your future bride is most like Venus or Hebe. That she resembles both, is universally agreed, I find, by those who have seen her. But it would be offending, you know, against all the rules of poetical justice, if I should only say she is as handsome as she is young, when after all, perhaps, the truth may be, that she has even more beauty than youth. In the mean while, I am turning over all the tender compliments that love has inspired, from the Lesbia of Catullus to the Chloe of Prior, and hope to gather such a collection of flowers as may not be unworthy of entering into a garland composed for your Stella. But before you introduce me as a poet; let me be recommended to her by a much better title, and assure her that I am your, &c.

 LETTER LXIX.

To PALEMON.

May, 29, 1718.

I Esteem your letters in the number of my most valuable possessions and preserve them as so many prophetic leaves upon which the fate of our distracted nation

nation is inscribed. But in exchange for the maxims of a patriot, I can only send you the reveries of a recluse, and give you *the stones of the brook for the gold of Ophir*. Never indeed, Palemon, was there a commerce more unequal, than that wherein you are contented to engage with me; and I could scarce answer it to my conscience to continue a traffick, where the whole benefit accrues singly to myself; did I not know that to confer without the possibility of an advantage, is the most pleasing exercise of generosity. I will venture then to make use of a privilege which I have long enjoyed; as I well know you love to mix the meditations of the philosopher with the reflections of the statesmen, and can turn with equal relish from the politicks of Tacitus, to the morals of Seneca.

I was in my garden this morning somewhat earlier than usual, when the sun, as Milton describes him,

*With wheels yet how'ring o'er the ocean brim
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray.*

There is something in the opening of the dawn at this season of the year, that enlivens the mind with a sort of chearful seriousness, and fills it with a certain calm rapture in the consciousness of its existence. For my own part at least, the rising of the sun has the same effect on me, as it is said to have had on the celebrated statue of Memnon: and I never observe that glorious luminary breaking out upon me, that I do not find myself harmonized for the whole day.

Whilst I was enjoying the freshness and tranquillity of this early season, and considering the many reasons I had to join in offering up that *morning incense*, which the poet I just now mentioned, represents as particularly arising, *from the earth's great altar*; I could not but esteem it as a principal blessing, that I was entering upon a new day with health and spirits. To awake with recruited vigour for the transactions of Life, is a mercy so generally dispensed, that it passes, like other the ordinary bounties of providence, without making
its

its due impression. Yet were one never to rise under these happy circumstances, without reflecting what numbers there are, who (to use the language of the most pathetick of authors) when they said *my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint*, were, like him, *full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day*, or *scared with dreams and terrified through visions*—— Were one to consider, I say, how many pass their nights in all the horrors of a disturbed imagination, or all the wakefulness of real pains, one could not find one's self exempt from such uneasy slumbers or such terrible vigils, without double satisfaction and gratitude. There is nothing indeed, contributes more to render a man contented with that draught of life which is poured out to himself, than thus to reflect on those more bitter ingredients, which are sometimes mingled in the cup of others.

In pursuing the same vein of thought, I could not but congratulate myself, that I had no part in that turbulent drama, which was going to be re-acted upon the great stage of the world; and rejoiced that it was my fortune to stand a distant and unengaged spectator of those several characters that would shortly fill the scene. This suggested to my remembrance a passage in the Roman tragick poet, where he describes the various pursuits of the busy and ambitious world, in very just and lively colours :

*Ille superbos aditus regum
Durasque fores, expers somni,
Colit : Hic nullo sine beatus
Componit opes, gaxis inbians,
Et congesto pauper in auro est.
Illum populi favor attonitum,
Fluctuque magis mobile vulgus,
Aura tumidum tollit inani.
Hic clamosi rabiosa fori
Furgia vendens improbus, iras
Et verba locat.*——

and

LETTER LXX. 85

and I could not forbear saying to myself in the language of the same author,

— *me mea tellus*
Lare secreto tutoque tegat!

Yet this circumstance, which your friend considers as so valuable a privilege, has been esteemed by others as the most severe of afflictions. The celebrated count de Buffy Rabutin has written a little treatise, wherein, after having shewn that the greatest men upon the stage of the world are generally the most unhappy; he closes the account by producing himself as an instance of the truth of what he has been advancing. But can you guess, Palemon, what this terrible disaster was, which thus entitled him to a rank in the number of these unfortunate heroes? He had composed, it seems, certain satirical pieces which gave offence to Louis the XIVth; for which reason that monarch banish'd him from the slavery and dependance of a court, to live in ease and freedom at his country-house. But the world had taken too strong possession of his heart, to suffer him to leave even the worst part of it without reluctance; and, like the patriarch's wife, he looked back with regret upon the scene from which he was kindly driven, though there was nothing in the prospect but flames. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXX.

To EUPHRONIUS.

Aug. 20, 1722.

Surely, Euphronius, the spirit of criticism has strangely possessed you. How else could you be willing to step aside so often from the amusements of the gayest scenes, in order to examine with me certain beauties, far other than those which at present, it might be

be imagined, would wholly engage your Attention? Who, indeed, that sees my friend overnight supporting the vivacity of the most sprightly assemblies, would expect to find him the next morning gravely poring over antiquated Greek, and weighing the merits of antient and modern geniuses? But I have long admired you as an elegant *Spectator formarum*, in every sense of the expression; and you can turn, I know, from the charms of beauty to those of wit, with the same refinement of taste and rapture. I may venture, therefore, to resume our critical correspondence without the form of an apology; as it is the singular character of Euphronius, to reconcile the philosopher with the man of the world, and judiciously divide his hours between action and retirement.

What has been said of a celebrated French translator, may with equal justice be applied to Mr. Pope, "that it is doubtful whether the dead or the living are most obliged to him." His translations of Homer, and imitations of Horace, have introduced to the acquaintance of the English reader, two the most considerable authors in all antiquity; as indeed they are equal to the credit of so many original works. A man must have a very considerable share of the different spirit which distinguishes those most admirable poets, who is capable of representing in his own language, so true an image of their respective *manners*. If we look no farther than these works themselves, without considering them with respect to any attempts of the same nature which have been made by others, we shall have sufficient reason to esteem them for their own intrinsic merit. But how will this uncommon genius rise in our admiration, when we compare his classical translations with those similar performances, which have employed some of the most celebrated of our poets? I have lately been turning over the Iliad with this view; and, perhaps, it will be no unentertaining amusement to you, to examine the several copies which I have collected of the original, as taken by some of the most considerable of our English masters. To single them out for this

pur-

purpose according to the order of the particular books, or passages, upon which they have respectively exercised their pencils, the pretensions of Mr. Tickel stand first to be examined.

The action of the Iliad opens, you know, with the speech of Chryses, whose daughter having been taken captive by the Grecians, was allotted to Agamemnon. This venerable priest of Apollo is represented as addressing himself to the Grecian chiefs, in the following pathetick simplicity of eloquence :

Ατρεΐδαι τε, καὶ ἄλλοι εὐκνημίδες Ἀχαιοί,
 ὕμιν μὲν θεοὶ δοῖεν, Ὀλυμπία δώματ' ἐχούεις,
 ἐκπύσσαι Πριάμοιο πόλιν, ἐν δ' οἰκαδ' ἵκησθαι.
 Παιδὰ δέ μοι λυσάιτε φίλην, τὰ δ' ἀποινα δέχισθε,
 Ἀζομένους Διὸς υἱοὺ ἐκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα. I. 17.

*Great Atreus' sons, and warlike Greece, attend.
 So may th' immortal gods your cause defend,
 So may you Priam's lofty bulwarks burn,
 And rich in gather'd spoils to Greece return,
 As, for these gifts, my daughter you bestow,
 And reu'rence due to great Apollo shew,
 Jove's fav'rite offspring, terrible in war,
 Who sends his shafts unerring from afar.* TICKEL.

That affecting tenderness of the father which Homer has mark'd out by the melancholy flow of the line, as well as by the endearing expression of,

Παιδὰ δέ μοι λυσάιτε φίλην——

is entirely lost by Mr. Tickel. When Chryses coldly mentions his daughter, without a single epithet of concern or affection, he seems much too indifferent himself to move the audience in his favour. But the whole passage, as it stands in Mr. Pope's Iliad, is in general animated with a far more lively spirit of poetry. Who can observe the moving posture of supplication in which he has drawn the venerable old priest, stretching out his

his arms in all the affecting warmth of intreaty, without sharing in his distress and melting into pity?

*Ye kings and warriors! may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground:
May Jove restore you when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore:
But oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseïs to these arms again.
If mercy fail, yet let my presents move,
And dread avenging Phæbus, son of Jove.* POPE.

The insinuation with which Chryses closes his speech, that the Grecians must expect the indignation of Apollo would pursue them, if they rejected the petition of his priest, is happily intimated by a single epithet.

And dread avenging Phæbus——

whereas the other translator takes the compass of three lines, to express the same thought less strongly.

When the heralds are sent by Agamemnon to Achilles, in order to demand Briseïs; that chief is prevailed upon to part with her: and accordingly directs Patroclus to deliver up that contested beauty, into their hands:

——Πάτροκλος δὲ φίλῳ ἐπιπέειθε' ἵταίρω,
Ἐκ δ' ἀγαγέ κλισίης Βρισηίδα καλλιπαρῆον,
Δώκε δ' ἀγεῖν. τῷ δ' αὐτὶς ἵτην παρὰ νηὸς Ἀχαιῶν.
Ἡ δ' αἰκῆσ' ἀμὰ τοῖσι γυνὴ κίεν.—— I. 345.

The beauty of Chryseïs, as described in these lines, together with the reluctance with which she is here represented as forced from her lord, cannot but touch the reader in a very sensible manner. Mr. Tickel, however, has debased this affecting picture, by the most unpoetical and familiar diction. I will not delay you with making my objections in form to his language; but have distinguished the exceptionable expressions, in the lines themselves:

——Patro-

—*Patroclus his dear friend oblig'd,
And usher'd in the lovely weeping maid,
Sore sigh'd she, as the heralds took her hand,
And oft look'd back slow-moving o'er the strand. Tickel.*

Our British Homer has restored this piece, to its original grace and delicacy:

*Patroclus now th' unwilling beauty brought:
She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
Pass'd silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back slow-moving o'er the strand. Pope.*

The tumultuous behaviour of Achilles, as described by Homer in the lines immediately following, afford a very pleasing and natural contrast to the more composed and silent sorrow of Briseis. The poet represents that hero as suddenly rushing out from his tent, and flying to the sea-shore, where he gives vent to his indignation; and in bitterness of soul complains to Thetis, not only of the dishonour brought upon him by Agamemnon, but of the injustice even of Jupiter himself:

—αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεύς,
Δακρυσας, ἱταρων ἀφάρ ἔζιτο νοσφίλιασθις,
Θιν' ἐφ' ἄλος πολίης, ὄρωι ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον.
Πολλὰ δέ μιν τε γὰρ φίλην ἡγεσάτο χεῖρας ὀρεγνυς, &c. I. 348.

Mr. Tickel in rendering the sense of these lines, has risen into a somewhat higher flight of poetry than usual. However, you will observe his expression in one or two places is exceedingly languid and prosaical; as the epithet which he has given to the waves, is highly injudicious. *Curling billows* might be very proper in describing a calm, but suggests too pleasing an image to be applied to the ocean when represented as *black with storms*.

*The widow'd hero, when the fair was gone,
Far from his friends sate bath'd in tears, alone.*

*On the cold beach he sate, and fix'd his eyes
Where black with storms the curling billows rise.
And as the sea wide-rolling he survey'd,
With outstretch'd arms to his fond mother pray'd.*

TICKEL.

Mr. Pope has opened the thought in these lines with great dignity of numbers, and exquisite propriety of imagination; as the additional circumstances which he has thrown in, are so many beautiful improvements upon his author:

*Not so his loss the fierce Achilles bore:
But sad retiring to the sounding shore,
O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from which his mother sprung:
Then bath'd in tears of anger and disdain,
Thus loud lamented to the stormy main.*

POPE.

Apollo having sent a plague among the Grecians, in resentment of the injury done to his priest Chryses by detaining his daughter, Agamemnon consents that Chryseis shall be restored. Accordingly, a ship is fitted out under the command of Ulysses, who is employed to conduct the damsel to her father. That hero and his companions being arrived at Chrysa, the place to which they were bound, delivered up their charge, and having performed a sacrifice to Apollo, set sail early the next morning for the Grecian camp. Upon this occasion Homer exhibits to us a most beautiful sea-piece.

Ημος δ' ηλιος κατεδυ, και επι κισφας ηλθε,
Δη τοτε κοιμησαντο παρα πρυμνησια νηος.
Ημος δ' ηριγυνεια φανη ροδοδακτυλος Ηως,
Και τοτ' επιτ' αναγοντο μετα τρατον ευρη Αχαιων.
Τοισιν δ' ικμενον ερον ιει καιεργος Απολλων.
Οι δ' ισον εγσαντ' ανα θ' ιγια λευκα πιτασσαν.
Εν δ' ανεμος πρησεν μεσον ισιον, αμφι δε κυμα
Στειρη πορφυρεον μεγαλ' ιαχε, νηος ισης.
Η δ' εθειν καλα κυμα διαπρησσοσα κειλευθα.

I. 475

If there is any passage throughout Mr. Tickel's translation of this book, which has the least pretence to stand in competition with Mr. Pope's version; it is undoubtedly that which corresponds with the Greek lines just now quoted. It would indeed be an instance of great partiality not to acknowledge, they breathe the true spirit of poetry; and I must own myself at a loss which to prefer upon the whole: though I think Mr. Pope is evidently superior to his rival, in his manner of opening the description:

*At ev'ning thro' the shore dispers'd they sleep,
Hush'd by the distant roarings of the deep.
When now, ascending from the shades of night
Aurora glow'd in all her rosy light,
The daughter of the dawn: 'b' awaken'd crew
Back to the Greeks encamp'd their course renew.
The breezes freshen: for with friendly gales
Apollo swell'd their wide-distended sails:
Cleft by the rapid prow the waves divide,
And in hoarse murmurs break on either side.* TICKEL.

*'Twas night: the chiefs beside their vessel lie,
Till rosy morn had purpled o'er the sky:
Then launch, and hoise the mast; indulgent gales,
Supply'd by Phæbus, fill the swelling sails;
The milk-white canvas bellying as they blow,
The parted ocean foams and roars below:
Above the bounding billows swift they steer, &c.* POPE.

There is something wonderfully pleasing in the judicious pause, which Mr. Pope has placed at the beginning of these lines. It necessarily awakens the attention of the reader, and gives a much greater air of solemnity to the scene, than if the circumstance of the time had been less distinctly pointed out, and blended, as in Mr. Tickel's translation, with the rest of the description.

Homer has been celebrated by antiquity, for those sublime images of the supreme being which he so often raises in the Iliad. It is Macrobius, if I remember right, who

who informs us, that Phidias being ask'd from whence he took the idea of his celebrated statue of Olympian Jupiter, acknowledged that he had heated his imagination by the following lines :

Η, και κυανησιν επ' οφρυσιν νευσε Κρονιων·
 Αμβροσαι δ' αρα χαιλαι περρωσαντο ανακλος,
 Κραλος απ' αθανατοιω· μεγαν δ' ελιξιεν ολυμπον. I. 528.

But whatever magnificence of imagery Phidias might discover in the original ; the English reader will scarce, I imagine, conceive any thing very grand and sublime from the following copy :

*This said, his kingly brow the fire inclin'd,
 The large black curls fell awful from behind,
 Thick shadowing the stern forehead of the god:
 Olympus trembled at th' almighty nod.* TICKEL.

That our modern statuaries, however, may not have an excuse for burlesquing the figure of the great father of gods and men, for want of the benefit of so animating a model ; Mr. Pope has preserved it to them in all its original majesty :

*He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows ;
 Shakes his ambrosial curls and gives the nod ;
 The stamp of fate, and sanction of the god :
 High heav'n w'th trembling the dread signal took,
 And all Olympus to the center shook.* POPE.

I took occasion in a former letter, to make some exceptions to a passage or two in the parting of Hector and Andromache, as translated by your favourite poet. I shall now produce a few lines from the same beautiful episode for another purpose, and in order to shew, with how much more masterly a hand even than Dryden himself, our great improver of English poetry has worked upon the same subject.

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As Andromache is going to the tower of Ilion, in order to take a view of the field of Battle, Hector meets her, together with her son the young Astyanax, at the Scæan gate. The circumstances of this sudden interview are finely imagined. Hector in the first transport of his joy is unable to utter a single word, at the same time that Andromache tenderly embracing his hands, bursts out into a flood of tears :

Ητ' ο' μιν μειδῶσιν ἰδὼν ἱς παῖδα σιωπῇ
 Ἀνδρομαχῇ δὲ οἱ ἄχι παρὶσσι δακρυχύστα,
 Ἐπ' ἀρὰ οἱ φυχῆρι, πρὸς τ' ἴφ' αὖτ' ἐκ τ' οἴμαξι.

VI. 404.

Dryden has translated this passage with a cold and unpoetical fidelity to the mere letter of the original :

*Hector beheld him with a silent smile,
 His tender wife stood weeping by the while,
 Press'd in her own his warlike hand she took,
 Then sigh'd, and thus prophetically spoke.* DRYDEN.

But Pope has judiciously taken a larger compass, and by heightening the piece with a few additional touches, has wrought it up in all the affecting spirit of tenderness and poetry :

*Silent the warrior smil'd, and pleas'd resign'd
 To tender passions all his mighty mind :
 His beauteous princess cast a mournful look,
 Hung on his hand, and then dejected spoke ;
 Her bosom labour'd with a boding sigh,
 And the big tear stood trembling in her eye.* POPE.

Andromache afterwards endeavours to persuade Hector to take upon himself the defence of the city, and not hazard a life so important, she tells him, to herself and his son, in the dangerous action of the field :

Τη δ' αὖτε προσέειπε μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ·
 Ἡ καὶ ἐμοὶ ταδὲ πᾶσι μελαι, γυναῖ· ἄλλα μάλ' αἰνῶς
 VOL. II. E Aides

Αἰδίομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳάδας ἡλεσιν ἴπλους,
 Αἶκε, παῖδες ὡς, νοσφιν ἀλυσκαζὼ πολέμοιο. VI. 440.

*To whom the noble Hector thus reply'd :
 That and the rest are in my daily care ;
 But should I shun the dangers of the war,
 With scorn the Trojans would reward my pains,
 And their proud ladies with their sweeping trains :
 The Grecian swords and lances I can bear :
 But loss of honour is my only care.*

DRYDEN.

Nothing can be more flat and unanimated than those lines. One may say upon this occasion, what Dryden himself, I remember, somewhere observes, that a good poet is more like himself in a dull translation, than his dead carcase would be to his living body. To catch indeed the soul of our Grecian bard, and breathe his spirit into an English version, seems to have been a privilege reserved solely for Pope :

*The chief reply'd : That post shall be my care ;
 Nor that alone, but all the works of war.
 How would the sons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
 And Troy's proud dames, whose garments sweep the ground,
 Attain the lustre of my former name,
 Should Hector basely quit the fields of fame ?*

POPE.

In the farther prosecution of this episode, Hector prophesies his own death, and the destruction of Troy; to which he adds, that Andromache should be led captive into Argos, where, among other disgraceful offices, which he particularly enumerates, she should be employed, he tells her, in the servile task of drawing water. The different manner in which this last circumstance is expressed by our two English poets, will afford the strongest instance, how much additional force the same thought will receive from a more graceful turn of phrase :

*Or from deep wells the living stream to take,
 And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.*

DRYDEN

— or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring. POPE.

It is in certain peculiar turns of diction, that the language of poetry is principally distinguished from that of prose; as indeed the same words are, in general, common to them both. It is in a turn of this kind, that the beauty of the last quoted line consists. For the whole grace of the expression would vanish, if instead of the two substantives which are placed at the beginning of the verse, the poet had employed the more common syntax of a substantive with its adjective.

When this faithful pair have taken their final adieu of each other; Hector returns to the field of battle, at the same time that the disconsolate Andromache joins her maidens in the palace. Homer describes this circumstance in the following tender manner.

Ὡς ἀρα φωνήσας κορυβ' εἰλετο παιδιμὸς ἑκλῶρ
Ἰππεῖν' ἀλοχὸς δὲ φίλῃ οἰκονδὲ βέβηκει
Ἐντροπαλίζομένη, θαλερὸν κατὰ δακρυ χεῖρα.
Αἰψὰ δ' ἰπεῖθ' ἱκανὴ δόμους εὐναίεταονίας
Ἑκτορος ἀνδροφονοιο· κίχνησ' αἶο δ' ἐνδοθὶ πολλὰς
Ἀμφιπόλεις, τῆσιν δὲ γούρ' πασησὶν ἐνώρσεν.
Αἰ μὲν ἐτὶ ζῶν γούρ' Ἑκτορὰ ὦ ἐνὶ οἰκῷ.

494.

I will make no remarks upon the different success of our two celebrated poets in translating this passage, but after having laid both before you, leave their versions to speak for themselves. The truth is, the disparity between them is much too visible to require any comment to render it more observable:

At this for new replies he did not stay,
But lac'd his crested helm, and strode away.
His lovely consort to her house return'd,
And looking often back, in silence mourn'd:
Home when she came her secret woes she vents,
And fills the palace with her loud laments.

E 2

Those

*Those loud laments her' ecchoing maids restore,
And Hector, yet alive, as dead, deplore.* DRYDEN.

*Thus having said, the glorious chief resumes
His tow'ry helmet, black with shading plumes.
His princess parts with a prophetick sigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye
That stream'd at ev'ry look : then moving slow,
Sought her own palace, and indulg'd her woe.
There, while her tears deplor'd the godlike man,
Thro' all the train the soft infection ran ;
The pious maids their mingled sorrow shed,
And mourn the living Hector as the dead.* POPE.

As I purpose to follow Mr. Pope through those several parts of the Iliad, where any of our distinguished poets have gone before him ; I must lead you on till we come to the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus, in the XIIth Book.

Γλαυκε, την δη νῶϊ τιτιμημεσθα μαλιστα
Εδρη τε, κρεασιν τε, ιδε πλειοις διπαισιν,
Εν Λυκιη, παντες δε, θεες ως, εισορωσι,
Και τεμενος νεμομεσθα μεγα Ξανθοιο παρ' οχθας,
Καλον, φυταλης και αρερης πυροφοροιο ;
Των υν χρε Λυκιοισι μελα πρωτοισιν εοιλας,
Εσαμεν, ηδε μαχης καυτειρης αντιβολησαι·
Οφρα τις ωδ' ειπη Λυκιων πυκα θωρηκτων,
Ου μαν ακλειεις Λυκιην κατακοιρανουσιν
Ημετεροι βασιλεις, εδωσι τε πριονα μηλα,
Οινον τ' εξαϊον, μελιηδεια· αλλ' αρα και ις
Εσθλη, ιπει Λυκιοισι μελα πρωτοιςι μαχονται.
Ω πεπον, ει μιν γαρ πολεμον περι τονδε φυγοντες
Αιει δη μελλοιμεν αγηρω τ' αθαιατω τε
Εσσεισθ', ητε κεν αυτος ενι πρωτοιςι μαχοιμην,
Ορτε κε σε σελλοιμι μαχην ες κυδιανειραν·
Νυν δ', εμπης γαρ κηρες εφεσασιν θανατοιο
Μυριαι, ας εκ εςι φυγειν βροτον, ωδ' υπαλυξαι,
Ιομεν' ηι τω ευχος ορεξομεν, ηι τις ημιν. XII. 310

This spirited speech has been translated by the famous author of Cooper's Hill :

*Above the rest why is our pomp and pow'r ?
Our flocks, our herds, and our possessions more ?
Why all the tributes land and sea affords,
Heap'd in great chargers, load our sumptuous boards ?
Our chearful guests carouse the sparkling tears
Of the rich grape, whilst musick charms their ears.
Why as we pass do those on Xanthus' shore
As gods behold us, and as gods adore ?
But that, as well in danger as degree,
We stand the first : that, when our Lycians see
Our brave examples, they admiring say,
Behold our gallant leaders ! These are they
Deserve their greatness, and unenvy'd stand;
Since what they act transcends what they command.
Could the declining of this fate, oh ! friend,
Our date to immortality extend,
Or if death sought not them, who seek not death,
Would I advance ? or should my vainer breath
With such a glorious folly thee inspire ?
But since with fortune nature does conspire ;
Since age, disease, or some less noble end,
Tho' not less certain, does our days attend ;
Since 'tis decreed, and to this period lead
A thousand ways, the noblest path we'll tread ;
And bravely on, till they or we, or all
A common sacrifice to honour fall.*

DENHAM.

Mr. Pope passeth so high an encomium on these lines, as to assure us, that if his translation of the same passage hath any spirit, it is in some degree due to them. It is certain they have great merit, considering the state of our English versification when Denham flourished : but they will by no means support Mr. Pope's compliment, any more than they will bear to stand in competition with his numbers. And I dare say you will join with me in the same opinion, when you consider the following version of this animated speech :

E 3

Why

*Why boast we, Glaucus, our extended reign,
 Where Xanthus' streams enrich the Lycian plain?
 Our num'rous herds that range the fruitful field,
 And hills where vines their purpled harvest yield?
 Our foaming bowls with purer nectar crown'd,
 Our feasts enhanc'd with musick's sprightly sound?
 Why on these shores are we with joy survey'd,
 Admir'd as heroes, and as gods obey'd?
 Unless great acts superior merit prove,
 And vindicate the bounteous power's above;
 That when with wond'ring eyes our martial bands
 Behold our deeds transcending our commands,
 Such, they may cry, deserve the sov'reign state
 Whom those that envy dare not imitate.
 Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,
 Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
 For lust of fame I should not vainly dare
 In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war.
 But, since, alas! ignoble age must come,
 Disease and death's inexorable doom;
 The life, which others pay, let us bestow,
 And give to fame what we to nature owe;
 Brave tho' we fall, and honour'd, if we live,
 Or let us glory gain, or glory give!*

POPE.

If any thing can be justly objected to this translation, it is, perhaps, that in one or two places it is too diffused and descriptive for that agitation in which it was spoken. In general, however, one may venture to assert, that it is warmed with the same ardour of poetry and heroism that glows in the original; as those several thoughts, which Mr. Pope has intermixed of his own, naturally arise out of the sentiments of his author, and are perfectly conformable to the character and circumstances of the speaker.

I shall close this review, with Mr. Congreve; who has translated the petition of Priam to Achilles for the body of his son Hector, together with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen.

Homer

Homer represents the unfortunate king of Troy, as entering unobserved into the tent of Achilles ; and illustrates the surprize which arose in that chief and his attendants, upon their first discovery of Priam, by the following simile ;

Ως δ' οταν ανδρ' ατη στυγερη λαβη, ος' εν πατρει
 Φωτα κατακλινας αλλον εξικετο δημον,
 Ανδρος ες αφνειν, θαμβος δ' εχει ειστροχης.
 Ως Αχιλλευς θαμβησεν, εδων Πριαμον Διοειδα.

XXIV. 480.

Nothing can be more languid and inelegant, than the manner in which Congreve has rendered this passage :

*But as a wretch who has a murder done,
 And seeking refuge does from justice run ;
 Ent'ring some house, in haste, where he's unknown,
 Creates amazement in the lookers on :
 So did Achilles gaze, surpriz'd to see
 The godlike Priam's royal misery.*

CONGREVE.

But Pope has raised the same thought with his usual grace and spirit :

*As when a wretch, who, conscious of his crime,
 Pursu'd for murder flies his native clime,
 Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amaz'd !
 All gaze, all wonder : thus Achilles gaz'd.*

POPE.

The speech of Priam is wonderfully pathetick and affecting. He tells Achilles, that out of fifty sons, he had one only remaining ; and of him he was now unhappily bereaved, by his sword. He conjures him by his tenderness for his own father to commiserate the most wretched of parents, who by an uncommon severity of fate, was thus obliged to kiss those hands which were imbrued in the blood of his children :

— ΤΗ ΝΥΝ ΕΝΕΧ' ΙΚΑΝΩ ΝΗΑΣ ΑΧΑΙΩΝ,
 Λυσόμενος παρὰ σπιο. Φερὼ δ' ἀπαιροῖσι σπασίνα.
 Ἀλλ', αἰδέοιο θεῶς, Αχιλεῦ, αὐτὸν τ' ἐλεησον,
 Μνησάμενος σὺ πατρός. ἐγὼ δ' ἐλεεινότερος περ,

Ετλην δ' οἱ ἔπειτα τις ἐπιχθονίος βροτός ἄλλος.
 Ἄνδρος παιδοφονοῖο ποτὶ σῶμα χεὶρ' ὀργασθαι, 501.

Those moving lines Mr. Congreve has debased into the lowest and most unaffecting prose :

*For his sake only hither I am come ;
 Rich gifts I bring, and wealth, an endless sum ;
 All to redeem that fatal prize you won,
 A worthless ransom for so brave a son.
 Fear the just gods, Achilles, and on me
 With pity look, think you your father see :
 Such as I am, he is ; alone in this,
 I can no equal have in miseries ;
 Of all mankind most wretched and forlorn,
 Bow'd with such weight as never has been borne ;
 Reduc'd to kneel and pray to you, from whom
 The spring and source of all my sorrows come ;
 With gifts to court mine and my country's bane,
 And kiss those hands which have my children slain.*

CONGREVE.

Nothing could compensate the trouble of labouring through these heavy and tasteless rhimes, but the pleasure of being relieved at the end of them with a more lively prospect of poetry :

*For him thro' hostile camps I bent my way,
 For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay ;
 Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear ;
 O hear the wretched and the gods revere !
 Think of thy father, and this face behold !
 See him in me, as helpless and as old !
 Tho' not so wretched: there he yields to me,
 The first of men in sov'reign misery ;
 Thus forc'd to kneel, thus grow'ling to embrace
 The scourge and ruin of my realm and race :
 Suppliant my childrens murd'rer to implore,
 And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore.*

POPE.

Achilles

Achilles having at length consented to restore the dead body of Hector, Priam conducts it to his palace. It is there placed in funeral pomp, at the same time that mournful dirges are sung over the corpse, intermingled with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen :

ΤΟΥ ΜΕΝ ΣΠΕΙΛΑ
ΤΡΗΤΟΙΣ ΕΝ ΛΕΧΕΙΣΣΙ ΘΕΣΑΝ, ΠΑΡΑ Δ' ΕΙΣΑΝ ΑΟΙΔΑΣ,
ΘΡΗΝΩΝ ΕΞΑΡΧΗΣ, ΟΙΤΕ ΣΟΝΟΕΣΣΑΝ ΑΟΙΔΗΝ
ΟΙ ΜΕΝ ΑΡ' ΕΘΡΗΝΕΟΝ, ΕΠΙ ΔΕ ΓΕΝΑΧΟΝΤΟ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ.

XXIV. 719.

There is something extremely solemn and affecting, in Homer's description of this scene of sorrow : a translator, who was touch'd with the least spark of poetry, could not, one should imagine, but rise beyond himself, in copying after so noble an original. It has not however, been able to elevate Mr. Congreve above his usual flatness of numbers :

— then laid
*With care the body on a sumptuous bed,
And round about were skilful fingers plac'd
Who wept and sigh'd, and in sad notes express'd
Their moan : All in a chorus did agree
Of universal mournful harmony.*

Congreve.

It would be the highest injustice to the following lines to quote them in opposition to those of Mr. Congreve : I produce them, as mark'd with a vein of poetry much superior even to the original :

*They weep and place him in a bed of state.
A melancholy choir attend around
With plaintive sighs, and musick's solemn sound :
Alternately they sing, alternate flow
Th' obedient tears, melodious in their woe ;
While deeper sorrows groan from each full heart,
And nature speaks at ev'ry pause of art.*

Pope.

Thus, Euphronius, I have brought before you some of the most renowned of our British bards, contending, as it were, for the prize of poetry : And there can be

no debate to whom it justly belongs. Mr. Pope seems indeed, to have raised our numbers to the highest possible perfection of strength and harmony : and, I fear, all the praise that the best succeeding poets can expect, as to the versification, will be, that they have happily imitated his manner. Farewell. I am, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

To the same.

July 17, 1730.

IF the temper and turn of Timanthes had not long prepared me for what has happened, I should have received your account of his death with more surprize: but I suspected from our earliest acquaintance, that his sentiments and disposition would lead him into a satiety of life, much sooner than nature would probably carry him to the end of it. When unsettled principles fall in with a constitutional gloominess of mind, it is no wonder the *tedium vite* should gain daily strength, till it pushes a man to seek relief against this most desperate of all distempers, from the point of a sword, or the bottom of a river.

But to learn to accommodate our taste to that portion of happiness which providence hath set before us, is of all the lessons of philosophy surely the most necessary. High and exquisite gratifications are not consistent with the appointed measures of humanity : and, perhaps, if we would enjoy the relish of our being, we should rather consider the miseries we escape, than too nicely examine the intrinsic worth of the happiness we possess. It is, at least, the business of true wisdom to bring together every circumstance, which may light up a flame of cheerfulness in the mind : and though we must be insensible if it should perpetually burn with the same unvaried brightness : yet prudence shall preserve it as a sacred fire, which is never to be totally extinguished.

I am

I am persuaded this disgust of life, is frequently indulged out of a principle of mere vanity. It is esteemed as a mark of uncommon refinement, and as placing a man above the ordinary level of his species, to seem superior to the vulgar feelings of happiness. True good-sense, however, most certainly consists, not in despising, but in managing, our stock of life to the best advantage, as a cheerful acquiescence in the measures of providence, is one of the strongest symptoms of a well constituted mind. Self weariness is a circumstance that ever attends folly; and to condemn our being, is the greatest, and indeed the peculiar infirmity of human nature. It is a noble sentiment which Tully puts into the mouth of Cato, in his treatise upon old age: *Non lubet mihi* (says that venerable Roman) *deplorare vitam, quod multi, et si docti, sæpe fecerunt; neque me vixisse pœnitet: quoniam ita vixi, ut non frustra me natum existimem.*

It is in the power, indeed, of but a very small portion of mankind, to act the same glorious part that afforded such high satisfaction to this distinguished patriot: but the number is yet far more inconsiderable of those, who cannot, in any station secure to themselves a sufficient fund of complacency to render life justly valuable. Who is it that is placed out of the reach of the highest of all gratifications, those of the generous affections; and that cannot provide for his own happiness by contributing something to the welfare of others? As this disease of the mind generally breaks out with most violence in those, who are supposed to be endowed with a greater delicacy of taste and reason than is the usual allotment of their fellow creatures; one may ask them, whether there is any satiety in the pursuits of useful knowledge? or, if one can ever be weary of benefiting mankind? Will not the fine arts supply a lasting feast to the mind? Or can there be wanting a pleasurable employment; so long as there remains even one advantageous truth to be discovered or confirmed? To complain that life has no joys, while there is a single creature whom we can relieve by our bounty, assist by
our

our counsels, or enliven by our presence, is to lament the loss of that which we possess, and is just as rational as to die of thirst with the cup in our hands. But the misfortune is, when a man is settled into a habit of receiving all his pleasures from the mere selfish indulgencies; he wears out of his mind the relish of every nobler enjoyment, at the same time that his powers of the sensual kind are growing more languid by each repetition. It is no wonder therefore he should fill up the measure of his gratifications, long before he has completed the circle of his duration; and either wretchedly sit down the remainder of his days in discontent, or rashly throw them up in despair. Farewell. I am, &c.

LETTER LXXII.

To TIMOCLEA.

Oct. 1, 1719.

CERTAINLY, Timoclea, you have a passion for the marvellous beyond all power of gratification. There is not an adventurer throughout the whole regions of chevalry, with whom you are unacquainted; and have wander'd through more folios than would furnish a decent library. Mine at least you have totally exhausted, and have so cleared my shelves of knights-errant, that I have not a single hero remaining that ever was regaled in bower or hall. But though you have drained me of my whole stock of romance, I am not entirely unprovided for your entertainment; and have enclosed a little Grecian fable for your amusement, which was lately transmitted to me by one of my friends. He discovered it among some old manuscripts, which have been long, it seems, in the possession of his family: and if you will rely upon his judgment, it is a translation by Spenser's own hand. There was a short dedication affixed to it, inscribed *To the most virtuous and beautiful*

beautiful lady, the Lady Carraw. But this, my correspondent tells me, is entirely devoured by the rats:

*O! may they ne'er again digest
The horrors of so sad a feast.* Prior.

They have spared, however, the date, which appears to be September 1591; as the initial letters E. S. subscribed at the bottom, are still, it seems, perfectly legible.

This is all the history I have to give you of the following piece: the genuineness of which I leave to be settled between my friend and the criticks, and am, &c.

The Transformation of

LYCON and EUPHORMIUS.

I.
DEEM not, ye plaintive crew, that suffer wrong,
Ne thou, O man! who deal'st the tort, misween
The equal gods, who heav'n's sky-mansions throng,
(Though viewless to the eyne they distant shewn,
Spectators reckless of our actions been.

Turning the volumes of grave sages old,
Where auncient faws in fable may be seen,
This truth I fond in paynim tale enroll'd;
Which for ensample drad my muse shall here unfold.

II.
What time Arcadia's flowret vallies fam'd,
Pelagus, first of monarchs, old, obey'd,
There wonn'd a wight, and Lycon was he nam'd,
Unaw'd by conscience, of no gods afraid,
Ne justice rul'd his heart, ne mercy sway'd.
Some held him kin to that abhorred race

Which heav'n's high tow'rs with mad emprise
assay'd;
And some his cruel lynage did ytrace
From fell Erynnis join'd in Pluto's dire embrace.

III. But

But he, perdy, far other tale did feign,
 And claim'd alliaunce with the sisters nine;
 And deem'd himself (what deems not pride so vain?)
 The peerless paragon of wit divine,
 Vaunting that ev'ry foe should rue its time.
 Right doughty wight! yet, sooth, withouten smart,
 All pow'rs fell the losels' shafts malign;
 'Tis virtue's arm to wield wit's heavenly dart,
 Point its keen barb with force, and send it to the heart.

IV.

One only impe he had, Pastora hight,
 Whose sweet amenaunce pleas'd each shepherd's eye:
 Yet pleas'd she not base Lycon's evil spright,
 Tho' blame in her not malice moten 'spy,
 Clear, without spot, as summer's cloudless sky.
 Hence poet's feign'd, Lycean Pan array'd
 In Lycon's form, inflam'd with passion high,
 Deceiv'd her mother in the covert glade;
 And from the stol'n embraceysprung the heav'nly maid.
 Thus fabling they: mean while the damsel fair
 A shepherd youth remark'd, as o'er the plain
 She demly pac'd along so debonaire
 Seem'd she as one of Dian's chosen train.
 Full many a fond excuse he knew to feign,
 In sweet converse to while with her the day,
 'Till love unwares his heedless heart did gain.
 Not dempt he, simple wight, no mortal may
 The blinded God once harbour'd, when he list, foresay.
 Now much he meditates if yet to speak,
 And how resolves his passion to conceal:
 But sure, quoth he, my feely heart will break
 If aye I smother what I aye must feel.
 At length by hope embolden'd to reveal
 The lab'ring secret dropped from his tongue,
 Whiles frequent singults check'd his faltering tale,
 In modest wise her head Pastora hong:
 For never maid more chaste inspired shepherd's song.

VII. What

VII.

What needs me to recount in long detail,
 The tender parley which these lemans held
 How oft he vow'd his love her ne'er should fail;
 How oft the stream from forth her eyne out-well'd,
 Doubting if constancy yet ever dwell'd,
 In heart of youthful wight: suffice to know,
 Each rising doubt he in her bosome quell'd.
 So parted they, more blithsome both, I trow:
 For rankling love conceal'd, me seems, is deadly woe.

VIII.

Eftsoons to Lycon, swift the youth did fare,
 (Lagg'd ever youth when Cupid urg'd his way?)
 And straight his gentle purpose did declare,
 And sooth the mount naunce of his herds display.
 Ne Lycon meant his suiten to foresay:
 "Be thine Pastora (quoth the masker fly) [pay]"
 "And twice two thousand sheep her dow'r shall
 Beat then the lover's heart with joyaunce high;
 Ne dempt that aught his blis could now betray,
 Ne gues'd that foul deceit in Lycon's bosome lay.

IX.

So forth he yode to seek his rev'rend fire;
 (The good Euphormius shepherds him did call)
 How sweet Pastora did his bosome fire,
 Her worth, her promis'd flocks, he tolden all.
 "Ah nere, my son, let Lycon thee enthrall,
 (Reply'd the sage, in wise experience old,)
 "Smooth is his tong, but full of guile withal,
 "In promise faithleis, and in vaunting bold:
 "Ne ever lamb of his will bleat within thy fold."

X.

With words prophetick thus Euphormius spake:
 And fact confirm'd what wisdom thus foretold.
 Full many a mean devise did Lycon make,
 The hoped day of spousal to with-hold,
 Framing new trains when nought mote serve his old,
 Nath'less he vow'd, Cyllene, cloud-topt hill,
 Should sooner down the lowly delve be roll'd,
 Than he his plighted promise would fulfill:
 But when, perdy, or where, the caitive sayen nill.

XI. Whiles

XI.

Whiles thus the tedious suns had journey'd round,
 Ne ought mote now the lovers hearts divide,
 Ne trust was there, ne truth in Lycon found;
 The maid with matron Juno for her guide,
 The youth by *Concord* led, in secret hy'd
 To Hymen's sacred fane: The honest deed
 Each god approv'd, and close the bands were ty'd.
 Certes, till happier moments should succeed,
 No prying eyne they weened their emprise mote areed.

XII.

But prying eyne of Lycon 'twas in vain,
 (Right practick in disguise) to hope beware.
 He trac'd their covert steps to Hymen's fane,
 And joy'd to find them in his long-laid snare.
 Algates, in semblaunt ire, he 'gan to swear,
 And roaren loud as in displeasance high:
 Then out he hurlen forth his daughter fair,
 Forlore, the houseless child of misery,
 Expos'd to killing cold, and pinching penury.

XIII.

Ah! whither now shall sad Pastora wend,
 To want abandon'd and by wrongs oppress?
 Who shall the wretched out-cast's teen befriend?
 Lives mercy then, if not in parent's breast?
 Yes, MERCY lives, the gentle goddess blest,
 At Jove's right hand, to Jove for ever dear.
 Aye at his feet she pleads the cause distrest,
 To sorrow's plaints she turns his equal ear,
 And wafts to heav'n's star-throne fair vertue's silent tear.

XIV.

'Twas SHE that bade Euphormius quell each thought,
 That well mote rise to check his gen'rous aid.
 Tho' high the torts which Lycon him had wrought,
 Tho' few the flocks his humble pastures fed;
 When as he learn'd Pastora's hapless sted,
 His breast humane with wonted pity flows.
 He op'd his gates, the naked exile led
 Beneath his roof; a decent drapet throws
 O'er her cold limbs, and sooths her undeserved woes.

XV. Now

XV.

Now loud tongu'd rumour bruited round the tale :
 Th' astoned Swains uneath could credence give,
 That in Arcadia's unambitious vale,
 A faytor false as Lycon e'er did live.
 But Jove (who in high heav'n does mortals prive,
 And ev'ry deed in golden ballance weighs)
 To earth his flaming charet baden drive,
 And down descends, enwapt in peerless blaze,
 To deal forth guerdon meet to good and evil ways.

XVI.

Where Eurymanthus, crown'd with many a wood,
 His silver stream through dasy'd vales does lead,
 Stretch'd on the flow'ry marge, in reckless mood,
 Proud Lycon sought by charm of jocund reed
 To lull the dire remorse of tortious deed.
 Him Jove acosts, in rev'rend semblaunce dight
 Of good Euphormius, and 'gan mild areed
 Of compact oft confirm'd, of fay yplight,
 Of nature's tender tye, of sacred rule of right.

XVII.

With lofty eyne, half loth to looke so low,
 Him Lycon view'd, and with swol'n surquedry
 'Gan rudely treat his sacred eld : When now
 Forth stood the god confest that rules the sky,
 In sudden sheen of drad divinity :
 " And know, false man," the lord of thunders said,
 " Not unobserv'd by heav'n's all-present eye
 " Thy cruel deeds : nor shall be unappay'd :
 " Go! be in form that best beseems thy thews, array'd."

XVIII.

Whiles yet he spake, th' affrayed trembling wight
 Transmew'd to blatant beast, with hideous howl
 Rush'd headlong forth, in well-deserved plight,
 Mid't dragons, minotaurs, and fiends to prowl,
 A wolf in form as erst a wolf in soul!
 To Pholoë, forest wild, he hy'd away,
 The horrid haunt of savage monsters foul.
 There helpless innocence is still his prey,
 Thief of the bleating fold, and shepherd's dire dismay.

XIX. Tho

XIX.

The Jove to good Euphormius, cot did wend,
 Where peaceful dwelt the man of vertue high,
 Each shepherd's praise and eke each shepherd's friend,
 In ev'ry act of sweet humanity.
 Him Jove approaching in mild majesty,
 Greeted all hail! than bade him join the throng
 Of glit'rand lights that gild the glowing sky.
 There shepherds nightly view his orb yhong,
 Where bright he shines eterne, the brightest stars among.

LETTER LXXIII.

To CLYTANDER.

February 8, 1719.

IF there was any thing in my former letter inconsistent with that esteem which is justly due to the antients, I desire to retract it in this; and disavow every expression which might seem to give precedency to the moderns in works of genius. I am so far indeed from entertaining the sentiments you impute to me; that I have often endeavoured to account for that superiority which is so visible in the compositions of their poets: and have frequently assigned their religion as in the number of those causes, which probably concurred to give them this remarkable preheminance. That enthusiasm which is so essential to every true artist in the poetical way, was considerably heightened and enflamed by the whole turn of their sacred doctrines: and the fancied presence of their Muses had almost as wonderful an effect upon their thoughts and language, as if they had been really and divinely inspired. Whilst all nature was supposed to swarm with divinities, and every oak and fountain was believed to be the residence of some presiding deity; what wonder if the poet was animated by the imagined influence of such exalted society, and found himself transported beyond the ordinary limits of sober

sober humanity? The mind when attended only by mere mortals of superior powers, is observed to rise in her strength; and her faculties open and enlarge themselves when she acts in the view of those for whom she has conceived a more than common reverence. But when the force of superstition moves in concert with the powers of imagination, and genius is enflamed by devotion, poetry must shine out in all her brightest perfection and splendor.

Whatever therefore the philosopher might think of the Religion of his country; it was the interest of the poet to be thoroughly orthodox. If he gave up his creed, he must renounce his numbers; and there could be no inspiration where there were no Muses. This is so true, that it is in compositions of the poetical kind alone, that the antients seem to have the principal advantage over the moderns: in every other species of writing one might venture perhaps to assert, that these latter ages have, at least, equalled them. When I say so, I do not confine myself to the productions of our own nation, but comprehend likewise those of our neighbours: and with that extent the observation will possibly hold true, even without an exception in favour of history and oratory.

But whatever may with justice be determined concerning that question; it is certain, at least, that the practice of all succeeding poets confirms the notion for which I am principally contending. Though the altars of paganism have many ages since been thrown down, and groves are no longer sacred; yet the language of the poets has not changed with the religion of the times, but the gods of Greece and Rome are still adored in modern verse. Is not this a confession, that fancy is enlivened by superstition, and that the antient bards caught their rapture from the old mythology? I will own, however, that I think there is something ridiculous in this unnatural adoption, and that a modern poet makes but an awkward figure with his antiquated gods. When the pagan system was sanctified by popular belief, a piece of machinery of that kind, as it had the
air

air of probability, afforded a very striking manner of celebrating any remarkable circumstance, or raising any common one. But now that this superstition is no longer supported by vulgar opinion, it has lost its principal grace and efficacy, and seems to be, in general the most cold and uninteresting method in which a poet can work up his sentiments. What, for instance, can be more unaffecting and spiritless than the compliment which Boileau has paid to Louis the XIVth on his famous passage over the Rhine? He represents the Naiads, you may remember, as alarming the god of that river, with an account of the march of the French monarch; upon which the river-god assumes the appearance of an old experienced commander, and flies to a Dutch fort, in order to exhort the garrison to sally out and dispute the intended passage. Accordingly they range themselves in form of battle with the Rhine at their head, who, after some vain efforts, observing Mars and Bellona on the side of the enemy, is so terrified with the view of those superior divinities, that he most gallantly runs away, and leaves the hero in quiet possession of his banks. I know not how far this may be relished by criticks, or justified by custom: but as I am only mentioning my particular taste, I will acknowledge, that it appears to me extremely insipid and puerile.

I have not however so much of the spirit of Typhoeus in me, as to make war upon the gods without restriction, and attempt to exclude them from their whole poetical dominions. To represent natural, moral, or intellectual qualities and affections as persons, and appropriate to them those general emblems by which their powers and properties are usually typified in pagan theology, may be allowed as one of the most pleasing and graceful figures of poetical rhetorick. When Dryden, addressing himself to the month of May as to a person, says,

For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours;

one may consider him as speaking only in metaphor: and when such shadowy beings are thus just shewn to the imagination, and immediately withdrawn again,
they

they certainly have a very powerful effect. But I can relish them no farther than as figures only : when they are extended in any serious composition beyond the limits of metaphor, and exhibited under all the various actions of real persons ; I cannot but consider them as so many absurdities which custom has unreasonably authoris'd. Thus Spenser, in one of his pastorals, represents the god of love as flying like a bird, from bough to bough. A shepherd, who hears a rustling among the bushes, supposes it to be some game, and accordingly discharges his bow. Cupid returns the shot, and after several arrows had been mutually exchanged between them, the unfortunate swain discovers whom it is he is contending with ; but as he is endeavouring to make his escape, receives a desperate wound in the heel. This fiction makes the subject of a very pretty idyllium in one of the Greek poets ; yet is extremely flat and disgusting as it is adopted by our British bard. And the reason of the difference is plain : in the former it is supported by a popular superstition ; whereas no strain of imagination can give it the least air of probability, as it is worked up by the latter :

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi. Hor.

I must confess at the same time, that the inimitable Prior has introduced this fabulous scheme with such uncommon grace, and has paid so many genteel compliments to his mistress by the assistance of Venus and Cupid, that one is carried off from observing the impropriety of this machinery, by the pleasing address with which he manages it : and I never read his tender poems of this kind, without applying to him what Seneca somewhere says upon a similar occasion : *Major ille est qui judicium abstulit, quam qui meruit.*

To speak my sentiments in one word, I would leave the gods in full possession of allegorical and burlesque poems : in all others I would never suffer them to make their appearance in person and as agents, but to enter only in simile, or allusion. It is thus Waller, of all our poets, has most happily employed them : and his application

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cation of the story of Daphne and Apollo will serve as an instance, in what manner the antient mythology may be adopted with the utmost propriety and beauty. Adieu, I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

To HORTENSIVS.

May 4, 1720.

IF the ingenious piece you communicated to me, requires any farther touches of your pencil; I must acknowledge the truth to be, what you are inclined to suspect, that my friendship has imposed upon my judgment. But though in the present instance your delicacy seems far too refined; yet, in general, I must agree with you, that works of the most permanent kind, are not the effects of a lucky moment, nor struck out at a single heat. The best performances, indeed, have generally cost the most labour; and that ease, which is so essential to fine writing, has seldom been attained without repeated and severe corrections: *Ludentis speciem dabit et torquebitur*, is a motto that may be applied, I believe, to most successful authors of genius. With as much facility as the numbers of the natural Prior seem to have flowed from him, they were the result (if I am not misinformed) of much application: and a friend of mine, who undertook to transcribe one of the noblest performances of the finest genius that this, or perhaps any age can boast, has often assured me, that there is not a single line, as it is now published, which stands in conformity with the original manuscript. The truth is, every sentiment has its peculiar expression, and every word its precise place, which do not always immediately present themselves, and generally demand frequent trials before they can be properly adjusted: not to mention the more important difficulties, which necessarily occur in settling the plan and regulating the higher parts which compose the structure of a finished work.

Those

Those indeed, who know what pangs it costs even the most fertile genius to be delivered of a just and regular production, might be inclined, perhaps, to cry out with the most antient of authors, *Oh! that mine adversary had written a book!* A writer of refined taste has the continual mortification to find himself incapable of taking possession of that ideal beauty, which warms and fills his imagination. His conceptions still rise above all the powers of his art, and he can but faintly copy out those images of perfection, which are impressed upon his mind. Never was any thing, says Tully, more beautiful than the Venus of Apelles, or the Jove of Phidias; yet were they by no means equal to those high notions of beauty which animated the geniuses of those wonderful artists. In the same manner, he observes, the great masters of oratory, imaged to themselves a certain perfection of eloquence, which they could only contemplate in idea, but in vain attempted to draw out in expression. Perhaps no author ever perpetuated his reputation, who could write up to the full standard of his own judgment: and I am persuaded that he, who upon a survey of his compositions, can with entire complacency pronounce them good, will hardly find the world join with him in the same favourable sentence.

The most judicious of all poets, the inimitable Virgil, used to resemble his productions to that animal, who, agreeably to the notions of the ancients, was supposed to bring her young into the world, a mere rude and shapeless mass: he was obliged to retouch them again and again, he acknowledged, before they acquired their proper form and beauty. Accordingly we are told, that after having spent eleven years in composing his *Æneid*, he intended to have set apart three more for the revival of that glorious performance. But being prevented by his last sickness from giving those finishing touches, which his exquisite judgment conceived to be still necessary, he directed his friends Tucca and Varius to burn the noblest poem that ever appeared in the Roman language. In the same spirit of delicacy Mr. Dryden

den tells us, that had he taken more time in translating this author, he might possibly have succeeded better; but never, he assures us, could he have succeeded so well as to have satisfied himself.

In a word, Hortensius, I agree with you, that there is nothing more difficult than to fill up the character of an author, who proposes to raise a just and lasting admiration; who is not contented with those little transient flashes of applause, which attend the ordinary race of writers, but only considers how he may shine out to posterity; who extends his views beyond the present generation, and cultivates those productions which are to flourish in future ages. What Sir William Temple observes of poetry, may be extended to every other work where taste and imagination are concerned: "It requires the greatest contraries to compose it: a genius both penetrating and solid; an expression both strong and delicate. There must be a great agitation of mind to invent, a great calm to judge and correct: there must be upon the same tree, and at the same time, both flower and fruit." But though I know you would not value yourself upon any performance, wherein these very opposite and very singular qualities were not conspicuous; yet I must remind you at the same time, that when the file ceases to polish, it must necessarily weaken. You will remember therefore, that there is a medium between the immoderate caution of that orator, who was three olympiads in writing a single oration; and the extravagant expedition of that poet, whose funeral pile was composed of his own numberless productions. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXXV.

To ORONTES.

IT is with much pleasure I look back upon that philosophical week which I lately enjoyed at ***; as there

there is no part, perhaps, of social life, which affords more real satisfaction, than those hours which one passes in rational and unreserved conversation. The free communication of sentiments among a set of ingenious and speculative friends, such as those you gave me the opportunity of meeting, throws the mind into the most advantageous exercise, and shews the strength or weakness of its opinions with greater force of conviction, than any other method we can employ.

That *it is not good for man to be alone*, is true in more views of our species than one; and society gives strength to our reason, as well as polish to our manners. The soul, when left entirely to her own solitary contemplations, is insensibly drawn by a sort of constitutional bias, which generally leads her opinions to the side of her inclinations. Hence it is that she contracts those peculiarities of reasoning, and little *habits* of thinking, which so often confirm her in the most fantastical errors. But nothing is more likely to recover the mind from this false bent, than the counter-warmth of impartial debate. Conversation opens our views, and gives our faculties a more vigorous play; it puts us upon turning our notions on every side, and holds them up to a light that discovers those latent flaws, which would probably have lain concealed in the gloom of unagitated abstraction. Accordingly one may remark, that most of those wild doctrines, which have been let loose upon the world, have generally owed their birth to persons, whose circumstances or dispositions have given them the fewest opportunities of canvassing their respective systems, in the way of free and friendly debate. Had the authors of many an extravagant hypothesis discussed their principles in private circles, ere they had given vent to them in publick; the observation of Varro had never, perhaps, been made, (or never at least with so much justice) that "there is no opinion so absurd, but has some philosopher or other to produce in its support."

Upon this principle, I imagine, it is, that some of the finest pieces of antiquity are written in the dialogue-

manner. Plato and Tully, it should seem, thought truth could never be examined with more advantage, than amidst the amicable opposition of well-regulated converse. It is probable, indeed, that subjects of a serious and philosophical kind were more frequently the topicks of Greek and Roman conversations, than they are of ours; as the circumstances of the world had not yet given occasion to those prudential reasons which may now, perhaps, restrain a more free exchange of sentiments amongst us. There was something, likewise, in the very scenes themselves where they usually assembled, that almost unavoidably turned the stream of their conversations into this useful channel. Their rooms and gardens were generally adorned, you know, with the statues of the greatest masters of reason that had then appeared in the world; and while Socrates or Aristotle stood in their view, it is no wonder their discourse fell upon those subjects, which such animating representations would naturally suggest. It is probable, therefore, that many of those antient pieces which are drawn up in the dialogue manner, were no imaginary conversations invented by their authors: but faithful transcripts from real life. And it is this circumstance, perhaps, as much as any other, which contributes to give them that remarkable advantage over the generality of modern compositions, which have been formed upon the same plan. I am sure, at least, I could scarce name more than three or four of this kind which have appeared in our language, worthy of notice. My lord Shaftesbury's dialogue, entitled *The moralists*; Mr. Addison's upon antient Coins; Mr. Spence's upon the *Odyssæy*, together with those of my very ingenious friend Philemon to Hydaspes; are, almost, the only productions in this way, which have hitherto come forth among us with advantage. These, indeed, are all master-pieces of the kind, and written in the true spirit of learning and politeness. The conversation in each of these most elegant performances is conducted, not in the usual absurd method of introducing one disputant to be tamely silenced by the other; but in the

more

more lively dramatick manner, where a just contrast of characters is preserved throughout, and where the several speakers support their respective sentiments with all the strength and spirit of a well-bred opposition.

But of all the conversation-pieces, whether antient or modern, either of the moral or polite kind, I know not one which is more elegantly written, than the little anonymous dialogue concerning the rise and decline of Eloquence among the Romans. I call it anonymous, though I am sensible it has been ascribed, not only to Tacitus and Quintilian, but even to Suetonius. The reasons, however, which the criticks have respectively produced are so exceedingly precarious and inconclusive, that one must have a very extraordinary share of classical faith indeed, to receive it as the performance of any of those celebrated writers. It is evidently, however, a composition of that period in which they flourish'd; and, if I were disposed to indulge a conjecture, I should be inclined to give it to the younger Pliny. It exactly coincides with his age; it is address'd to one of his particular friends and correspondents; it is marked with some similar expressions and sentiments. But, as arguments of this kind are always more imposing than solid, I recommend it to you as a piece, concerning the author of which, nothing satisfactory can be collected. This I may one day or other, perhaps, attempt to prove in form, as I have amused myself with giving it an English dress. In the mean time I have enclosed my translation in this packet; not only with a view to your sentiments, but in return to your favour. I was persuaded I could not make you a better acknowledgment for the pleasure of that conversation which I lately participated through your means, than by introducing you to one, which (if my copy is not extremely injurious to its original) I am sure you cannot attend to, without equal entertainment and advantage. Adieu. I am, &c.

XXXI [125] L E T T E R S
A DIALOGUE * concerning

O R A T O R Y.

To FABRUS.

YOU have frequently, my friend, required me to assign a reason whence it has happened, that the Oratorical character, which spread such a glorious lustre upon former ages, is now so totally extinguished among us, as scarce to preserve even its name. It is the ancients alone, you observed, whom we distinguish with that appellation; while the Eloquent of the present times are styled only pleaders, patrons, advocates, or any thing, in short, but orators.

Hardly, I believe, should I have attempted a solution of your difficulty, or ventured upon the examination of a question, wherein the genius of the moderns, if they cannot, or their judgment, if they will not rise to the same heights, must necessarily be given up; had I nothing of greater authority to offer upon the subject, than my own particular sentiments. But having been present, in the very early part of my life, at a conversation between some persons of great eloquence, considering the age in which they lived, who discussed this very point; my memory, and not my judgment, will be concerned, whilst I endeavour, in their own style and manner, and according to the regular course of their debate, to lay before you the several reasonings of those celebrated geniuses. Each of them, indeed, agreeably to the peculiar turn and character of the speaker, alledging different, though probable, causes of the same fact; but all of them supporting their respective sentiments

- * It is necessary to inform those readers of the following dialogue, who may be disposed to compare it with the original, that the edition of Heumannus, printed at Gottingen, 1719, has been generally followed.

ments with ingenuity and good sense. Nor were the orators of the present age without an advocate in this debate: for one of the company took the opposite side, and treating the antients with much severity and contempt, declared in favour of modern eloquence.

Marcus Aper and Julius Secundus, two distinguished geniuses of our Forum, made a visit to Maternus the day after he had publicly recited his tragedy of Cato: a piece, which gave, it seems, great offence to those in power, and was much canvassed in all conversations. Maternus, indeed, seemed throughout that whole performance, to have considered only what was suitable to the character of his hero, without paying a proper regard to those prudential restraints, which were necessary for his own security. I was at that time a warm admirer and constant follower of those great men; inso-much, that I not only attended them when they were engaged in the courts of judicature; but, from my fond attachment to the arts of eloquence, and with a certain ardency peculiar to youth, I joined in all their parties, and was present at their most private conversations. Their great abilities, however, could not secure them from the criticks. They alledged, that Secundus had by no means an easy elocution; whilst Aper, they pretended, owed his reputation as an orator, more to nature than to art. It is certain, nevertheless, that their objections were without foundation. The speeches of the former were always delivered with sufficient fluency; and his expression was clear, though concise; as the latter had, most undoubtedly, a general tincture of literature. The truth is, one could not so properly say, he was *without*, as *above* the assistance of learning. He imagined, perhaps, the powers and application of his genius would be so much the more admired, as it should not appear to derive any of its lustre from the acquired arts.

We found Maternus, when we entered his apartment, with the tragedy in his hand which he had recited the day before. Are you then (said Secundus, addressing himself to him) so little discouraged with the malicious insinuations of these ill-natured censurers, as still to cho-

rish this obnoxious tragedy of yours? Or, perhaps, you are revising it, in order to expunge the exceptionable passages; and purpose to send your Cato into the world, I will not say with superior charms, but, at least, with greater security than its original form. You may peruse it (returned he) if you please; you will find it remains just in the same situation as when you heard it read. I intend, however, that Thyestes shall supply the defects of Cato: for I am meditating a tragedy upon that subject, and have already, indeed, formed the plan. I am hastening, therefore, the publication of this play in my hand, that I may apply myself entirely to my new design. Are you then in good earnest (replied Aper) so enamoured of dramattick poetry, as to renounce the business of oratory, in order to consecrate your whole leisure to—Medea I think it was before, and now, it seems, to Thyestes? When the causes of so many worthy friends, the interests of so many powerful communities, demand you in the Forum: a task more than sufficient to employ your attention, though neither Cato nor Domitius had any share of it; though you were not continually turning from one dramattick performance to another, and adding the tales of Greece to the history of Rome.

I should be concerned, answered Maternus, at the severity of your rebuke, if the frequency of our debates upon this subject, had not rendered it somewhat familiar to me. But how (added he, smiling) can you accuse me of deserting the business of my profession, when I am every day engaged in *defending* poetry against your accusations? And I am glad (continued he, looking towards Secundus) that we have now an opportunity of discussing this point before so competent a judge. His decision will either determine me to renounce all pretensions to poetry for the future, or (which I rather hope) will be a sanction for my quitting that confined species of oratory, in which, methinks, I have sufficiently laboured, and authorize the devoting myself to the more enlarged and sacred eloquence of the Muses.

Give me leave, interposed Secundus, before Aper takes exception to his judge, to say, what all honest ones usually

usually do in the same circumstances, that I desire to be excused from sitting in judgment upon a cause, wherein I must acknowledge myself biassed in favour of a party concerned: All the world is sensible of that strict friendship which has long subsisted between me and that excellent man, as well as great poet, Saleius Bassus. To which let me add, if the Muses are to be arraigned, I know of none who can offer more prevailing bribes.

I have nothing to alledge against Bassus (returned Aper) or any other man, who not having talents for the bar, chooses to establish a reputation of the poetical kind. Nor shall I suffer Maternus (for I am willing to join issue with him before you) to evade my charge, by drawing others into his party. My accusation is levelled singly against him; who, formed as he is by nature with a most masculine and truly oratorical genius, chooses to suffer so noble a faculty to lie waste and uncultivated. I must remind him, however, that by the exercise of this commanding talent, he might at once both acquire and support the most important friendships, and have the glory to see whole provinces and nations rank themselves under his patronage: a talent, of all others, the most advantageous, whether considered with respect to interest, or to honours; a talent, in short, that affords the most illustrious means of propagating a reputation, not only within our own walls, but throughout the whole compass of the Roman empire, and indeed to the most distant nations of the globe.

If utility ought to be the governing motive of every action and every design of our lives; can we possibly be employed to better purpose, than in the exercise of an art, which enables a man, upon all occasions, to support the interest of his friend, to protect the rights of the stranger, to defend the cause of the injured? that not only renders him the terror of his open and secret adversaries, but secures him, as it were, by the most firm and permanent guard?

The particular usefulness, indeed, of this profession, is evidently manifested in the opportunities it supplies of serving others, though we should have no occasion to exert it in our own behalf: but should we, upon any

occurrence, be ourselves attacked, the sword and buckler is not a more powerful defence in the day of battle, than oratory in the dangerous season of publick arraignment. What had Marcellus lately to oppose to the united resentment of the whole senate, but his eloquence? Yet, supported by that formidable auxiliary, he stood firm and unmoved, amidst the assaults of the artful Helvidius; who notwithstanding he was a man of sense and elocution, was totally inexpert in the management of this sort of contests. But I need not insist farther on this head; well persuaded as I am, that Maternus will not controvert so clear a truth. Rather let me observe, the pleasure which attends the exercise of the persuasive arts: a pleasure, which does not arise only once, perhaps, in a whole life; but flows in a perpetual series of gratifications. What can be more agreeable to a liberal and ingenious mind, formed with a relish of rational enjoyments, than to see one's levée crouded with a concourse of the most illustrious personages? not as followers of your interest, or your power; not because you are rich and destitute of heirs; but singly in consideration of your superior qualifications. It is not unusual upon these occasions, to observe the wealthy, the powerful, and the childless, addressing themselves to a young man (and probably no rich one) in favour of themselves or their friends. Tell me now, has authority or wealth a charm, equal to the satisfaction of thus beholding persons of the highest dignity, venerable by their age, or powerful by their credit, in the full enjoyment of every external advantage, courting your assistance, and tacitly acknowledging, that, great and distinguished as they are, there is something still wanting to them more valuable than all their possession? Represent to yourself the honourable croud of clients conducting the orator from his house, and attending him in his return: think of the glorious appearance he makes in publick, the distinguishing respect that is paid to him in the courts of judicature, the exultation of heart when he rises up before a full audience, hushed in solemn silence and fixed attention, pressing round the admired speaker, and receiving every passion he deems proper to raise!

raise! Yet these are but the ordinary joys of eloquence, and visible to every common observer. There are others, and those far superior, of a more concealed and delicate kind, and of which the orator himself can alone be sensible. Does he stand forth prepared with a studied harangue? As the composition, so the pleasure in this instance, is more solid and equal. If, on the other hand, he rises in a new and unexpected debate, the previous solicitude which he feels upon such occasions, recommends and improves the pleasure of his success; as indeed the most exquisite satisfaction of this kind is, when he boldly hazards the unpremeditated speech. For it is in the productions of genius, as in the fruits of the earth; those which arise spontaneously, are ever the most agreeable. If I may venture to mention myself, I must acknowledge, that neither the satisfaction I received when I was first invested with the laticlave, nor even when I entered upon the several high posts in the state; though the pleasure was heightened to me, not only as those honours were new to my family, but as I was born in a city by no means favourable to my pretensions:—The warm transports, I say, which I felt at those times, were far inferior to the joy which has glowed in my breast, when I have successfully exerted my humble talents in defence of those causes and clients committed to my care. To say truth, I imagined myself, at such seasons, to be raised above the highest dignities, and in the possession of something far more valuable, than either the favour of the great, or the bounty of the wealthy, can ever bestow.

Of all the arts or sciences, there is not one, which crowns its votaries with a reputation in any degree comparable to that of eloquence. It is not only those of a more exalted rank in the state, who are witnesses of the orator's fame; it is extended to the observation even of our very youth, of any hopes or merit. Whose example, for instance, do parents more frequently recommend to their sons? Or who are more the gaze and admiration of the people in general? Whilst every stranger that arrives, is curious of seeing the man, of whose character he has heard such honourable report, I will venture to affirm,

that Marcellus, whom I just now mentioned, and Vibius (for I choose to produce my instances from modern times, rather than from those more remote) are as well known in the most distant corners of the empire, as they are at Capua or Vercellæ, the places, it is said, of their respective nativity: an honour, for which they are by no means indebted to their immense riches. On the contrary, their wealth may justly, it should seem, be ascribed to their eloquence. Every age, indeed, can produce persons of genius, who by means of this powerful talent, have raised themselves to the most exalted station. But the instances I just now mentioned, are not drawn from distant times: they fall within the observation of our own eyes. Now the more obscure the original extraction of those illustrious persons was, the more humble the patrimony to which they were born; so much stronger proof they afford of the great advantage of the oratorical arts. Accordingly, without the recommendation of family or fortune; without any thing very extraordinary in their virtues, (and one of them rather contemptible in his address) they have for many years maintained the highest credit and authority among their fellow citizens. Thus, from being chiefs in the forum, where they preserved their distinguished eminence as long as they thought proper; they have passed on to the enjoyment of the same high rank in Vespasian's favour, whose esteem for them seems to be mixed even with a degree of reverence: as indeed they both support and conduct the whole weight of his administration. That excellent and venerable Prince (whose singular character it is, that he can endure to hear truth) well knows that the rest of his favourites are distinguished only as they are the objects of his munificence; the supplies of which he can easily raise, and with the same facility confer on others. Whereas Crispus and Marcellus recommended themselves to his notice, by advantages which no earthly potentate either did, or could, bestow. The truth of it is, inscriptions, and statues, and ensigns of dignity could claim but the lowest rank, amidst *their* more illustrious distinctions. Not that they are unpossessed of honours of this kind, any more than they

they are destitute of wealth or power : advantages, much oftener affectedly depreiated, than sincerely despised.

Such, my friends, are the ornaments, and such the rewards of an early application to the business of the forum, and the arts of oratory ! But poetry, to which Maternus wishes to devote his days, (for it was that which gave rise to our debate) confers neither dignity to her followers in particular, nor advantage to society in general. The whole amount of her pretensions is nothing more than the transient pleasure of a vain and fruitless applause. Perhaps what I have already said, and am going to add, may not be very agreeable to my friend Maternus : however, I will venture to ask him, what avails the eloquence of his Jason or Agamemnon ? What mortal does it either defend or oblige ? Who is it that courts the patronage, or joins the train, of Bassus, that ingenious (or if you think the term more honourable) that illustrious poet ? Eminent as he may be, if his friend, his relation, or himself was involved in any litigated transactions, he would be under the necessity of having recourse to Secundus, or perhaps to you, my friend *. But by no means, however, as you are a poet, and in order to solicit you to bestow some verses upon him : For verses he can compose himself, fair, it seems, and goodly.—Yet after all, when he has, at the cost of much time, and many a laboured lucubration, spun out a single canto, he is obliged to traverse the whole town in order to collect an audience. Nor can he procure even this compliment, slight as it is, without actually purchasing it : for the hiring a room, erecting a stage and dispersing his tickets, are articles which must necessarily be attended with some expence. And let us suppose that his poem is approved : the whole admiration is over in a day or two, like that of a fine flower which dies away without producing any fruit. In a word, it secures to him, neither friend nor patron, nor confers even the most inconsiderable favour upon any single creature. The whole amount of his humble gains, is the fleeting pleasure of a clamorous applause ! We looked upon it, lately, as an uncommon instance

* Maternus.

of generosity in Vespasian, that he presented Bassus with fifty thousand Sesterces *. Honourable, I grant, it is, to possess a genius which merits the imperial bounty: but how much more glorious (if a man's circumstances will admit of it) to exhibit in one's own person an example of munificence and liberality? Let it be remembered likewise, that if you would succeed in your poetical labours, and produce any thing of real worth in that art, you must retire, as the poets express themselves,

To silent grottoes and sequester'd groves.

That is, you must renounce the conversation of your friends, and every civil duty of life, to be concealed in gloomy and unprofitable solitude.

If we consider the votaries of this idle art with respect to fame, that single recompence which they pretend to derive, or indeed to seek, from their studies; we shall find, they do not by any means enjoy an equal proportion of it with the sons of Oratory. For even the best poets fall within the notice of but a very small proportion of mankind; whilst indifferent ones are universally disregarded. Tell me, Maternus, did ever the reputation of the most approved rehearsal of the poetical kind, reach the cognizance even of half the Town; much less extend itself to distant provinces? Did ever any foreigner, upon his arrival here, enquire after Bassus? Or if he did, it was merely as he would after a picture or a statue: just to look upon him and pass on. I would in no sort be understood as discouraging the pursuit of poetry in those who have no talents for oratory; if happily they can, by that means, amuse their leisure and establish a just character. I look upon every species of eloquence as venerable and sacred; and prefer her, in whatever guise she may think proper to appear, before any other of her sister-arts: not only, Maternus, when she exhibits herself in your chosen favourite, the solemn tragedy, or lofty heroic, but even in the pleasant lyric, the wanton elegy, the severe iambick, the witty epigram,

* About 400 Pounds of our Money.

gram, or, in one word, in whatever other habit he is pleased to assume. But (I repeat it again) my complaint is levelled singly against you; who designed as you are by nature for the most exalted rank of eloquence, choose to desert your station, and deviate into a lower order. Had you been endued with the athletic vigour of Nicomachus, and born in Greece, where arts of that sort are esteemed not unworthy of the most refined characters; as I could not patiently have suffered that uncommon strength of Arm, formed for the nobler combat, to have idly spent itself in throwing the javelin, or tossing the quoit: so I now call you forth from rehearsals and theatres, to the forum, and business, and high debate; especially since you cannot urge the same plea for engaging in poetry which is now generally alledged, that it is less liable to give offence than oratory. For the ardency of your genius has already flamed forth, and you have incurred the displeasure of our superiors: not, indeed, for the sake of a friend; *that* would have been far less dangerous; but in support, truly, of *Cato*. Nor can you offer in excuse, either the duty of your profession, justice to your client, or the unguarded heat of debate. You fixed, it should seem, upon this illustrious and popular subject with deliberate design, and as a character that would give weight and authority to your sentiments. You will reply (I am aware) "it was that very circumstance which gained you such universal applause, and rendered you the general topick of discourse." Talk no more then, I beseech you, of security and repose, whilst you thus industriously raise up to yourself so potent an adversary. For my own part, at least, I am contented with engaging in questions of a more modern and private nature; wherein, if in defence of a friend I am under a necessity of taking liberties unacceptable, perhaps, to my superiors, the honest freedom of my zeal will, I trust, not only be excused but applauded.

After having delivered this with his usual warmth and earnestness; I am prepared (replied Maternus, in a milder tone and with an air of pleasantry) to draw up a charge against the orators, no less copious than that of

my friend's panegyrick in their behalf. I suspected, indeed, he would turn out of his road, in order to attack the poets; though I must own at the same time, he has somewhat softened the severity of his satire, by certain concessions he is pleased to make in their favour. He is willing, I perceive, to allow those, whose genius does not point to oratory, to apply themselves to poetry. Nevertheless, I do not scruple to acknowledge, that with some talents, perhaps, for the forum, I chose to build my reputation on dramattick poetry. The first attempt I made for this purpose, was by exposing the dangerous power of Vatinius: a power which even Nero himself disapproved, and which that infamous favourite abused, to the profanation of the sacred Muses. And I am persuaded, if I enjoy any share of fame, it is to poetry rather than to oratory that I am indebted for the acquisition. It is my fixed purpose, therefore, entirely to withdraw myself from the fatigue of the bar. I am by no means ambitious of that splendid concourse of clients, which Aper has represented in such pompous colours, any more than I am of those sculptured honours which he mentioned; though I must confess, they have made their way into my family, notwithstanding my inclinations to the contrary. Innocence is, now at least, a surer guard than eloquence; and I am in no apprehension, that I shall ever have occasion to open my lips in the senate, unless, perhaps, in defence of a friend.

Woods and groves and solitude, the objects of Aper's invective, afford me, I will own to him, the most exquisite satisfaction. Accordingly, I esteem it one of the great privileges of poetry, that it is not carried on in the noise and tumult of the world, amidst the painful importunity of anxious suitors, and the affecting tears of distressed criminals. On the contrary, a mind enamoured of the Muses retires into scenes of innocence and repose, and enjoys the sacred haunts of silence and contemplation. Here genuine eloquence received her birth, and *here* she fixed her sacred and sequestered habitation. 'Twas *here*, in decent and becoming garb, she recommended herself to the early notice of mortals,
inspiring

inspiring the breasts of the blameless and the good : here first the voice divine of oracles was heard. But she of modern growth, offspring of lucre and contention, was born in evil days, and employed (as *Aper* very justly expressed it) instead of a *weapon* : Whilst happier times, or, in the language of the *Muses*, the golden age, free alike from orators and from crimes, abounded with inspired poets, who exerted their noble talents, not in defending the guilty, but in celebrating the good. Accordingly no character was ever more eminently distinguished or more augustly honoured : first by the gods themselves, to whom the poets were supposed to serve as ministers at their feasts and messengers of their high behests ; and afterwards by that sacred offspring of the gods, the first venerable race of legislators. In that glorious list we read the names, not of orators indeed, but of *Orpheus*, and *Linus*, or, if we are inclined to trace the illustrious roll still higher, even of *Apollo* himself.

But these, perhaps, will be treated by *Aper* as heroes of Romance. He cannot however deny, that *Homer* has received as signal honours from posterity, as *Demosthenes* ; or that the fame of *Sophocles* or *Euripides* is as extensive, as that of *Lycias* or *Hyperides* ; that *Cicero's* merit is less universally confessed than *Virgil's* ; or that not one of the compositions of *Asinius* or *Messala* is in so much request, as the *Medea* of *Ovid* or the *Thyestes* of *Varius*. I will advance even farther, and venture to compare the unenvied fortune and happy self-converse of the poet, with the anxious and busy life of the orator ; notwithstanding the hazardous contentions of the latter, may possibly raise him even to the consular dignity. Far more desirable, in my estimation, was the calm retreat of *Virgil* : where yet he lived not unhonoured by his prince, nor unregarded by the world. If the truth of either of these assertions should be questioned, the letters of *Augustus* will witness the former ; as the latter is evident from the conduct of the whole Roman people, who when some verses of that divine poet were repeated in the theatre, where he happened to be present, rose up to a man and saluted

saluted him with the same respect that they would have paid to Augustus himself. But to mention our own times: I would ask whether Secundus Pomponius is any thing inferior either in dignity of life, or solidity of reputation, to Afer Domitius? As to Crispus or Marcus, to whom Afer refers me for an animating example, what is there in their present exalted fortunes really desirable? Is it that they pass their whole lives either in being alarmed for themselves, or in striking terror into others? Is it that they are daily under a necessity of courting the very men they hate? that holding their dignities by unmanly adulation, their masters never think them sufficiently slaves, nor the people sufficiently free? And after all, what is this their so much envied power? Nothing more, in truth, than what many a paltry freedman has frequently enjoyed. But—

“*NE* let the lovely Muses lead (as Virgil sings) to silent groves and heavenly-haunted streams, remote from business and from care; and still superior to the painful necessity of acting in wretched opposition to my better heart. Nor let me more, with anxious steps and dangerous, pursue pale Fame amidst the noisy Forum! May never clamorous suitors, nor panting freedom with officious haste, awake my peaceful slumbers! Uncertain of futurity, and equally unconcerned, ne’er may I bribe the favour of the great, by rich bequests to avarice insatiate; nor, accumulation vain! amass more wealth than I may transfer as inclination prompts, whenever shall arrive my life’s last fatal period: And then, not in horrid guise of mournful pomp, but crowned with chaplets gay, may I be entombed; nor let a friend, with unavailing zeal, solicit the useless tribute of posthumous memorials.”

Maternus had scarce finished these words, which he uttered with great emotion, and with an air of inspiration, when Messalla entered the room; who, observing much attention in our countenances, and imagining the conversation turned upon something of more than ordinary import; Perhaps, said he, you are engaged in a consultation, and I doubt I am guilty of an unseasonable interruption.

interruption. By no means, answered Secundus ; on the contrary, I wish you had given us your company sooner ; for I am persuaded you would have been extremely entertained. Our friend Aper has, with great eloquence, been exhorting Maternus, to turn the whole strength of his genius and his studies to the business of the forum : while Maternus, on the other hand, agreeably to the character of one who was pleading the cause of the Muses, has defended his favourite art with a boldness and elevation of style more suitable to a poet than an orator.

It would have afforded me infinite pleasure, replied Messalla, to have been present at a debate of this kind. And I cannot but express my satisfaction, in finding the most eminent orators of our times, not confining their geniuses to points relating to their profession ; but canvassing such other topicks in their conversation ; as give a very advantageous exercise to their faculties at the same time that it furnishes an entertainment, of the most instructive kind, not only to themselves, but to those who have the privilege of being joined in their party. And believe me, Secundus, the world received with much approbation your history of Julius Asiaticus, as an earnest that you intend to publish more pieces of the same nature. On the other side (continued he, with an air of irony) it is observed, with equal satisfaction, that Aper has not yet bid adieu to the questions of the schools, but employs his leisure rather after the example of the modern rhetoricians than of the antient orators.

I perceive, returned Aper, that you continue to treat the moderns with your usual derision and contempt ; while the antients alone are in full possession of your esteem. It is a maxim, indeed, I have frequently heard you advance (and, allow me to say, with much injustice to yourself and to your brother) that there is no such thing in the present age as an orator. This you are the less scrupulous to maintain, as you imagine it cannot be imputed to a spirit of envy ; since you are willing at the same time, to exclude yourself from a character

character which every body else is inclined to give you.

I have hitherto, replied Messalla, found no reason to change my opinion : and I am persuaded, that even you yourself, Aper, whatever you may sometimes affect to the contrary) as well as my other two friends here, join with me in the same sentiments. I should, indeed, be glad if any of you would discuss this matter, and account for so remarkable a disparity ; which I have often endeavoured in my own thoughts. And what to some appears a satisfactory solution of this phenomenon, to me, I confess heightens the difficulty : for I find the very same difference prevails among the Grecian orators ; and that the priest Nicetes, together with others of the Ephesian and Mitylenean schools, who humbly content themselves with raising the acclamations of their tasteless auditors ; deviate much farther from Æschines or Demosthenes, than you my friend, from Tully or Asinius.

The question you have started, said Secundus, is a very important one, and well worthy of consideration. But who so capable of doing justice to it as your self ? who besides the advantages of a fine genius and great literature, have given it seems particular attention to this enquiry. I am very willing, answered Messalla, to lay before you my thoughts upon the subject, provided you will assist me with yours as I go along. I will engage for two of us, replied Maternus : Secundus and myself will speak to such points as you shall, I do not say omit, but think proper to leave to us. As for Aper you just now informed us, it is usual with him to dissent from you in this article : and, indeed, I see he is already preparing to oppose us, and will not look with indifference upon this our association in support of the antients.

Undoubtedly, returned Aper, I shall not tamely suffer the moderns to be condemned, unheard and undefended. But first let me ask, whom it is you call *antients* ? What age of orators do you distinguish by that designation ? The word always suggests to me a Nestor, or an Ulysses ; men who lived above a thousand years
since ;

since : whereas you seem to apply it to Demosthenes and Hyperides, who, it is agreed, flourished so late as the times of Philip and Alexander, and, indeed, survived them. It appears from hence, that there is not much above four hundred years distance between our age and that of Demosthenes : a portion of time, which considered with respect to human duration, appears, I acknowledge, extremely long ; but if compared with that immense æra which the philosophers talk of, is exceedingly contracted, and seems almost but of yesterday. For if it be true, what Cicero observes in his treatise inscribed to Hortensius, that the great and genuine year, is that period in which the heavenly bodies return to the same position, wherein they were placed when they first began their respective orbits ; and this revolution contains 12,954 of our solar years ; then Demosthenes, this antient Demosthenes of yours, lived in the same year, or rather I might say, in the same month with ourselves. But to mention the Roman orators : I presume, you will scarcely prefer Menenius Agrippa (who may with some propriety, indeed, be called an antient) to the men of eloquence among the moderns. It is Cicero, then, I suppose, together with Coelius, Cæsar, and Calvus, Brutus, Asinius, and Messalla, to whom you give this honourable precedency : yet I am at a loss to assign a reason, why these should be deemed antients rather than moderns. To instance in Cicero : he was killed, as his freedman Tiro informs us, on the 26th of December, in the consulship of Hirtius and Pansa, in which year Augustus and Pedius succeeded them in that dignity. Now, if we take fifty-six years for the reign of Augustus, and add twenty three for that of Caius, fourteen a-piece for Claudius and Nero, one for Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, together with the six that our present excellent *prince has enjoyed the empire, we shall have about
one

* From this passage Fabricius asserts, that this dialogue was written in the 6th year of Vespasian's reign : but he evidently mistakes the time in which the scene of it is laid, for that in which it was composed. It is upon

one hundred and twenty years from the death of Cicero to these times: a period, to which it is not impossible that a man's life may extend. I remember, when I was in Britain, to have met with an old soldier, who assured me, he had served in the army which opposed Cæsar's descent upon that island. If we suppose this person, by being taken prisoner, or by any other means, to have been brought to Rome, he might have heard Cæsar and Cicero, and likewise any of our contemporaries. I appeal to yourselves, whether at the last publick donative, there were not several of the populace who acknowledged they had received the same bounty, more than once, from the hands of Augustus? It is evident, therefore, that these people might have been present at the pleadings both of Corvinus and Asinius: for Corvinus was alive in the middle of the reign of Augustus, and Asinius towards the latter end. Surely, then, you will not split a century, and call one orator an antient, and another a modern, when the very same person might be an auditor of both; and thus, as it were, render them contemporaries.

The conclusion I mean to draw from this observation is, that whatever advantages these orators might derive to their characters, from the period of time in which they flourished; the same will extend to us: and, indeed, with much more reason to S. Galba, or to C. Carbonius. It cannot be denied, that the compositions of these last are very inelegant and unpolished performances; as I could wish, that not only your admired Calvus and Coelius, but I will venture to add too, even Cicero himself (for I shall deliver my sentiments with great freedom) had not considered them as the proper models of their imitation. Suffer me to premise, however, as I go along, that eloquence changes its qualities as it runs through different ages. Thus as Gracchus, for instance,

upon arguments not better founded, that the critics have given Tacitus and Quintilian the honour of this elegant performance.

Vide Fabric. Bib. Lat. V. 1. 559.

instance is much more copious and florid than old Cato, so Crassus rises into a far higher strain of politeness and refinement than Gracchus. Thus likewise, as the speeches of Tully are more regular, and marked with superior elegance and sublimity, than those of the two orators last mentioned; so Corvinus is considerably more smooth and harmonious in his periods, as well as more correct in his language than Tully. I am not considering, which of them is most eloquent. All I endeavour to prove at present is, that oratory does not manifest itself in one uniform figure, but is exhibited by the antients under a variety of different appearances. However, it is by no means a just way of reasoning, to infer that one thing must necessarily be worse than another, merely because it is not the same. Yet such is the unaccountable perversity of human nature, that whatever has antiquity to boast, is sure to be admired; as every thing novel is certainly disapproved. There are criticks, I doubt not, to be found, who prefer even Appius Cæcus to Cato: as it is well known that Cicero had his censurers, who objected that his style was swelling and redundant, and by no ways agreeable to the elegant conciseness of Attick eloquence. You have certainly read the letters of Calvus and Brutus to Cicero. It appears by these epistolary collections, that Cicero considered Calvus as a dry, unanimated orator, at the same time that he thought the style of Brutus negligent and unconnected. These, in their turn, had their objections, it seems, to Cicero: Calvus condemned his oratorical compositions, for being weak and enervated; as Brutus (to use his own expression) esteemed them *feeble* and *disjointed*. If I were to give my opinion, I should say, they each spoke truth of one another. But I shall examine these orators separately hereafter: my present design is only to consider them in a general view.

The admirers of antiquity are agreed, I think, in extending the æra of the antients as far as Cassius Severus; whom they assert to have been the first that struck out from the plain and simple manner, which till then prevailed. Now I affirm that he did so, not from any deficiency in point of genius or learning, but from his superior

superior judgment and good sense. He saw it was necessary to accommodate oratory, as I observed before, to the different times and taste of the audience. Our ancestors, indeed, might be contented (and it was a mark of their ignorance and want of politeness that they were so) with the immoderate and tedious length of speeches, which was in vogue in those ages; as in truth, to be able to harangue for a whole day together was itself looked upon, at that illiterate period, as a talent worthy of the highest admiration. The immeasurable introduction, the circumstantial detail, the endless division and subdivision, the formal argument drawn out into a dull variety of logical deductions, together with a thousand other impertinencies, of the same tasteless stamp, which you may find laid down among the precepts of those driest of all writers, Hermagoras and Apollodorus, were then held in supreme honour. And, to complete all, if the orator had just dipped into philosophy, and could sprinkle his harangue with some of the most trite maxims of that science, they thundered out his applauses to the skies. For those were new and uncommon topicks to them; as indeed very few of the orators themselves, had the least acquaintance with the writings either of the philosophers or the rhetoricians. But in our more enlightened age, where even the lowest part of an audience have at least some general notion of literature, eloquence is constrained to find out new and more florid paths. She is obliged to avoid every thing that may fatigue or offend the ears of her audience; especially as she must now appear before judges, who decide not by law, but by authority; who prescribe what limits they think proper to the orator's speech; nor calmly wait till he is pleased to come to the point, but call upon him to return, and openly testify their impatience whenever he seems disposed to wander from the question. Who, I beseech you, would, in our days, endure an orator, who should open his harangue with a tedious apology for the weakness of his constitution? Yet almost every oration of Corvinus sets out in that manner. Would any man *now* have patience to hear out the five long books against *Verres*? or those endless volumes

volumes of pleadings in favour of Tully, or Cæcina ? The vivacity of our modern judges even prevents the speaker ; and they are apt to conceive some sort of prejudice against all he utters, unless he has the address to bribe their attention by the strength and spirit of his arguments, the liveliness of his sentiments, or the elegance and brilliancy of his descriptions. The very populace have some notion of the beauty of language, and would no more relish the uncoothness of antiquity in a modern orator, than they would the gesture of old Roscius or Ambivius in a modern actor. Our young students too, who are forming themselves to eloquence, and for that purpose attend the courts of judicature, expect not merely to *hear*, but to carry home something worthy of remembrance : and it is usual with them, not only to canvass among themselves, but to transmit to their respective provinces, whatever ingenious thought or poetical ornament the orator has happily employed. For even the embellishments of poetry are now required ; and those too, not copied from the heavy and antiquated manner of Attius or Pacuvius, but formed in the lively and elegant spirit of Horace, Virgil, and Lucan. Agreeably, therefore, to the superior taste and judgment of the present age, our orators appear with a more polished and graceful aspect. And most certainly it cannot be thought that their speeches are the less efficacious, because they soothe the ears of the audience with the pleasing modulation of harmonious periods. Has eloquence lost her power, because she has improved her charms ? Are our temples less durable than those of old, because they are not formed of rude materials, but shine out in all the polish and splendor of the most costly ornaments ?

To confess the plain truth, the effect which many of the antients have upon me, is to dispose me either to laugh or sleep. Not to mention the more ordinary race of orators such as Canutius, Arrius, or Fannius, with some others of the same dry and unaffecting cast ; even Calvus himself scarce pleases me in more than one or two short orations: though he has left behind him, if I mistake not, no less than one and twenty volumes. And the world in general seems to join with me in the
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same opinion of them : for how few are the readers of his invectives against Fuscinius, or Drusus ? Whereas those against Vatinius are in every body's hands ; particularly the second, which is indeed, both in sentiment and language, a well-written piece. It is evident therefore, that he had an idea of just composition, and rather wanted genius than inclination, to reach a more graceful and elevated manner. As to the orations of Coelius, though they are by no means valuable upon the whole, yet they have their merit, so far as they approach to the exalted elegance of the present times. Whenever, indeed, his compositions is careless and unconnected, his expression low, and his sentiments gross ; it is then he is truly an antient : and I will venture to affirm, there is no one so fond of antiquity as to admire him in that part of his character. We may allow Cæsar, on account of the great affairs in which he was engaged ; as we may Brutus, in consideration of his philology, to be less eloquent than might otherwise be expected of such superior geniuses. The truth is, even their warmest admirers acknowledge, that as orators they by no means shine with the same lustre, which distinguished every other part of their reputation. Cæsar's speech in favour of Decius, and that of Brutus in behalf of king Deiotarus, with some others of the same coldness and languor, have scarcely, I imagine, met with any readers ; unless, perhaps, among such who can relish their verses. For verses, we know, they writ (and published too) I will not say with more spirit, but undoubtedly with more success, than Cicero ; because they had the good fortune to fall into much fewer hands. Asinius, one would guess, by his air and manner, to have been contemporary with Menenius, and Appius ; though in fact he lived much nearer to our times. It is visible he was a close imitator of Attius and Pacuvius, not only in his tragedies, but also in his orations ; so remarkably dry and unpolished are all his compositions ! But the beauty of eloquence, like that of the human form, consists in the smoothness, strength and colour of its several parts. Corvinus I am inclined to spare ; though it was his own fault that he did not equal the elegant refinements of modern

modern compositions ; as it must be acknowledged that his genius was abundantly sufficient for that purpose.

The next I shall take notice of, is Cicero ; who had the same contest with those of his own times, as mine, my friends, with you. They, it seems, were favourers of the antients ; whilst He preferred the eloquence of his contemporaries : and in truth, he excels the orators of his own age in nothing more remarkably, than in the solidity of his judgment. He was the first who set a polish upon oratory ; who seemed to have any notion of delicacy of expression, and the art of composition. Accordingly he attempted a more florid style ; as he now and then breaks out into some lively flashes of wit ; particularly in his later performances, when much practice and experience (those best and surest guides) had taught him a more improved manner. But his earlier compositions are not without the blemishes of antiquity. He is tedious in his exordiums, too circumstantial in his narrations, and careless in retrenching luxuriances. He seems not easily affected, and is but rarely fired ; as his periods are seldom either properly rounded, or happily pointed : he has nothing, in fine, you would wish to make your own. His speeches, like a rude edifice, have strength indeed and permanency ; but are destitute of that elegance and splendor which are necessary to render them perfectly agreeable. The orator, however, in his compositions, as the man of wealth in his buildings, should consider ornament as well as use : his structure should be, not only substantial, but striking ; and his furniture not merely convenient, but rich, and such, as will bear a close and frequent inspection ; whilst every thing that has a mean and awkward appearance ought to be totally banished. Let our orator then, reject every expression that is obsolete, and grown rusty, as it were, by age : let him be careful not to weaken the force of his sentiments, by a heavy and inartificial combination of words, like our dull compilers of annals : let him avoid all low and insipid raillery ; in a word, let him vary the structure of his periods, nor end every sentence with the same uniform close.

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I will not expose the meanness of Cicero's conceits, nor his affectation of concluding almost every other period with, *as it should seem*, instead of pointing them with some lively and spirited turn. I mention even these with reluctance, and pass over many others of the same injudicious cast. It is singly, however, in little affectations of this kind, that they who are pleased to style themselves *ancient orators* seem to admire and imitate him. I shall content myself with describing their characters, without mentioning their names: but you are sensible, there are certain pretenders to taste who prefer Lucilius to Horace, and Lucretius to Virgil; who hold the eloquence of your favourite Bassus or Nonianus in the utmost contempt, when compared with that of Sisenna or Varro; in a word, who despise the productions of our modern rhetoricians, yet are in raptures with those of Calvus. These curious orators prate in the courts of judicature after the *manner of the ancients* (as they call it) till they are deserted by the whole audience, and are scarce supportable even to their very clients. The truth of it is, that soundness of eloquence which they so much boast, is but an evidence of the natural weakness of their genius, as it is the effect alone of tame and cautious art. No physician would pronounce a man to enjoy a proper constitution, whose health proceeded entirely from a studied and abstemious regimen. To be only not indisposed, is but a small acquisition; it is spirits, vivacity, and vigour that I require: whatever comes short of this, is but one remove from imbecillity.

Be it then, as with great ease it may, and in fact is the glorious distinction of you, my illustrious friends, to ennoble our age with the most refined eloquence. It is with infinite satisfaction, Messalla, I observe, that you single out the most florid among the ancients for your model. And you, my other two ingenious friends* so happily unite strength of sentiment with beauty of expression; such a pregnancy of imagination, such a symmetry of ordonnance distinguish your speeches; so co-

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* Maternus and Secundus.

pious or so concise in your elocution, as different occasions require; such an inimitable gracefulness of style, and such an easy flow of wit adorn and dignify your compositions; in a word, so absolutely you command the passions of your audience, and so happily temper your own, that however the envy and malignity of the present age may withhold that applause which is so justly your due; posterity you may rely upon it, will speak of you in the advantageous terms which you well deserve.

When Aper had thus finished: It must be owned, said Maternus, our friend has spoken with much force and spirit. What a torrent of learning and eloquence has he poured forth in defence of the moderns! and how completely vanquished the ancients with those very weapons which he borrowed from them! However, (continued he, applying himself to Messalla) you must not recede from your engagement. Not that we expect you should enter into a defence of the ancients, or suppose, (however Aper is pleased to compliment) that any of us can stand in competition with them. Aper himself does not sincerely think so, I dare say; but takes the opposite side in the debate, merely in imitation of the celebrated manner of antiquity. We do not desire you therefore, to entertain us with a panegyrick upon the ancients: their well-established reputation places them far above the want of our encomiums. But what we request of you is, to account for our having so widely departed from that noble species of eloquence which they displayed: especially since we are not, according to Aper's calculation, more than a hundred and twenty years distant from Cicero.

I shall endeavour, returned Messalla, to pursue the plan you have laid down to me.——I shall not enter into the question with Aper, (though indeed he is the first that ever made it one) whether those who flourished above a century before us, can properly be styled ancients. I am not disposed to contend about words: let them be called ancients, or ancestors, or whatever other name he pleases, so it be allowed their oratory was superior to ours. I admit too, what he just now advanced,

that there are various kinds of eloquence discernible in the same period; much more in different ages. But as among the Attick orators, Demosthenes is placed in first rank, then Æschines, Hyperides next, and after him Lysias and Lycurgus; an æra, which on all hands is agreed to have been the prime season of oratory: so amongst us, Cicero is by universal consent preferred to all his contemporaries; as after him Calvus, Asinius, Cæsar, Cælius, and Brutus, are justly acknowledged to have excelled all our proceeding or subsequent orators. Nor is it of any importance to the present argument, that they differ in manner, since they agree in kind. The compositions of Calvus, 'tis confessed, are distinguished by their remarkable conciseness; as those of Asinius are by the harmonious flow of his language. Brilliancy of sentiment is Cæsar's characteristick; as poignancy of wit is that of Cælius. Solidity recommends the speeches of Brutus; while copiousness, strength, and vehemence, are the predominant qualities in Cicero. Each of them, however, displays an equal soundness of eloquence; and one may easily discover a general resemblance and kindred likeness run through their several works, though diversified, indeed, according to their respective geniuses. That they mutually detracted from each other, (as it must be owned there are some remaining traces of malignity in their letters) is not to be imputed to them as orators but as men. No doubt Calvus, Asinius, and even Cicero himself, were liable to be infected with jealousy, as well as with other human frailties and imperfections. Brutus, however, I will singly except, from all imputations of malignity, as I am persuaded he spoke the sincere and impartial sentiments of his heart: for can it be supposed that He should envy Cicero, who does not seem to have envied even Cæsar himself? As to Galba, Lælius, and some others of the ancients, whom Aper has thought proper to condemn; I am willing to admit that they have some defects, which must be ascribed to a growing and yet immature eloquence.

After all, if we must relinquish the nobler kind of oratory, and adopt some lower species, I should certainly prefer

prefer the impetuosity of Gracchus, or the incorrectness of Crassus, to the studied foppery of Mæcenas, or the childish jingle of Gallio : so much rather would I see eloquence cloathed in the most rude and negligent garb, than decked out with the wanton ornaments of paint and false finery ! There is something in our present manner of elocution, which is so far from being oratorical, that it is not even manly ; and one would imagine our modern pleaders by the levity of their wit, the affected smoothness of their periods and licentiousness of their style, had a view to the stage in all their compositions. Accordingly some of them are not ashamed to boast (which one can scarce even mention without a blush) that their speeches are adapted to the soft modulation of stage-musick. It is this depravity of taste which has given rise to the very indecent and preposterous, though very frequent expression, that such an orator speaks *smoothly*, and such a dancer moves *eloquently*. I am willing to admit therefore, that Cassius Severus (the single modern whom Aper has thought proper to name) when compared to these his degenerate successors, may justly be deemed an orator ; though it is certain in the greater part of his compositions there appears far more strength than spirit. He was the first who neglected chastity of style, and propriety of method. Inexpert in the use of those very weapons with which he engages, he ever lays himself open to a thrust, by always endeavouring to attack ; and one may much more properly say of him that he pushes at random, than that he comports himself according to the just rules of regular combat. Nevertheless he is greatly superior, as I observed before, in the variety of his learning, the agreeableness of his wit, and the strength of his genius, to those who succeeded him : not one of whom however, has Aper ventured to bring into the field. I imagined, that after having deposed Asinius, and Cælius and Calvus, he would have substituted another set of orators in their place, and that he had numbers to produce in opposition to Cicero, to Cæsar, and the rest whom he rejected ; or at least, one rival to each of them. On the contrary, he has

distinctly and separately censured all the ancients, while he has ventured to command the moderns in general only. He thought, perhaps, if he singled out some, he should draw upon himself the resentment of all the rest: for every declaimer among them, modestly ranks himself, in his own fond opinion, before Cicero, though indeed after Gabinianus. But what Aper was not hardy enough to undertake, I will be bold to execute for him; and draw out his oratorical heroes in full view, that it may appear by what degrees the spirit and vigour of ancient eloquence was impaired and broken.

Let me rather intreat you, (said Maternus interrupting him) to enter without any farther preface, upon the difficulty you first undertook to clear. That we are inferior to the ancients in point of eloquence, I by no means want to have proved; being entirely of that opinion: but my present enquiry is how to account for our sinking so far below them? A question, it seems, you have examined, and which I am persuaded you would discuss with much calmness, if Aper's unmerciful attack upon your favourite orators had not a little discomposed you. I am nothing offended, returned Messalla, with the sentiments which Aper has advanced; neither ought you, my friend, remembering always that it is an established law in debates of this kind, that every man may with entire security disclose his unreserved opinion. Proceed then, I beseech you, replied Maternus, to the examination of this point concerning the ancients, with a freedom equal to theirs: from which I suspect, alas! we have more widely degenerated than even from their eloquence.

The cause (said Messalla, resuming his discourse) does not lie very remote; and, though you are pleased to call upon me to assign it, is well known, I doubt not, both to you and to the rest of this company. For is it not obvious that eloquence, together with the rest of the polite arts, has fallen from her ancient glory, not for want of admirers, but through the dissoluteness of our youth, the negligence of parents, the ignorance of preceptors, and the universal disregard of ancient manners?

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evils, which derived their source from Rome, and thence spread themselves through Italy, and over all the provinces; though the mischief, indeed, is most observable within our own walls. I shall take notice, therefore, of those vices to which the youth of this city are more peculiarly exposed; which rise upon them in number as they encrease in years. But before I enter farther into this subject, let me premise an observation or two concerning the judicious method of discipline practised by our ancestors, in training up their children.

In the first place then, the virtuous matrons of those wiser ages, did not abandon their infants to the mean hovels of mercenary nurses, but tenderly reared them up at their own breasts; esteeming the careful regulation of their children and domestick concerns, as the highest point of female merit. It was customary with them likewise to choose out some elderly female relation, of approved conduct, with whom the family in general entrusted the care of their respective children, during their infant years. This venerable person strictly regulated, not only their more serious pursuits, but even their very amusements; restraining them, by her respective presence, from saying or acting any thing contrary to decency and good manners. In this manner, we are informed, Cornelia the mother of the two Gracchi, as also Aurelia and Attia, to whom Julius and Augustus Cæsar owed their respective births, undertook this office of family education, and trained up those several noble youths to whom they were related. This method of discipline was attended with one very singular advantage: the minds of young men were conducted sound and untainted to the study of the noble arts. Accordingly, whatever profession they determined upon, whether that of arms, eloquence, or law, they entirely devoted themselves to that single pursuit, and with undissipated application, possessed the whole compass of their chosen science.

But in the present age, the little boy is delegated to the care of some paultry Greek chamber-maid, in conjunction

junction with two or three other servants, (and even those generally of the worst kind) who are absolutely unfit for every rational and serious office. From the idle tales and gross absurdities of these worthless people, the tender and uninstructed mind is suffered to receive its earliest impressions. It cannot, indeed, be supposed, that any caution should be observed among the domestick; since the parents themselves are so far from training their young families to virtue and modesty, that they set them the first examples of luxury and licentiousness. Thus our youth gradually acquire a confirmed habit of impudence, and a total disregard of that reverence they owe both to themselves and to others. To say truth, it seems as if a fondness of horses, actors and gladiators, the peculiar and distinguishing folly of this our city, was impress'd upon them even in the womb: and when once a passion of this contemptible sort has seized and engaged the mind, what opening is there left for the nobler arts?

All conversation in general is infected with topicks of this kind; as they are the constant subjects of discourse, not only amongst our youth in their academies, but even of their tutors themselves. For it is not by establishing a strict discipline, or by giving proofs of their genius, that this order of men gain pupils; it is by the meanest compliances and most servile flattery. Not to mention how ill instructed our youth are in the very elements of literature, sufficient pains is by no means taken in bringing them acquainted with the best authors, or in giving them a proper notion of history, together with a knowledge of men and things. The whole that seems to be considered in their education, is, to find out a person for them called a Rhetorician. I shall take occasion immediately, to give you some account of the rise and progress of this profession in Rome, and shew with what contempt it was received by our ancestors. But it will be necessary to lay before you a previous view of that scheme of discipline which the ancient orators practis'd; of whose amazing industry and unwearied application to every branch of the polite arts, we meet with many remarkable accounts in their own writings.

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I need not inform you that Cicero, in the latter end of his treatise entitled Brutus, (the former part of which is employed in commemorating the ancient orators) gives a sketch of the several progressive steps by which he formed his eloquence. He there acquaints us, that he studied the civil law under Q. Mucius; that he was instructed in the several branches of philosophy by Philo the academick, and Diodorus the stoick; that not satisfied with attending the lectures of those eminent masters, of which there were at that time great numbers in Rome, he made a voyage into Greece and Asia, in order to enlarge his knowledge, and embrace the whole circle of sciences. Accordingly he appears by his writings to have been master of logick, ethicks, astronomy, and natural philosophy, besides being well versed in geometry, musick, grammar, and, in short, in every one of the fine arts. For thus it is, my worthy friends; from deep learning and the united confluence of the arts and sciences, the resistless torrent of that amazing eloquence derived its strength and rapidity.

The faculties of the orator are not exercised, indeed, as in other sciences, within certain precise and determinate limits: on the contrary, eloquence is the most comprehensive of the whole circle of arts. Thus He alone can justly be deemed an orator, who knows how to employ the most persuasive arguments upon every question; who can express himself suitable to the dignity of his subject, with all the powers of grace and harmony; in a word, who can penetrate into every minute circumstance, and manage the whole train of incidents to the greatest advantage of his cause. Such, at least, was the high idea which the ancients formed of this illustrious character. In order however, to attain this eminent qualification, they did not think it necessary to declaim in the schools, and idly waste their breath upon feigned or frivolous controversies: It was their wiser method, to apply themselves to the study of such useful arts as concern life and manners, as treat of moral good and evil, of justice, and injustice, of the decent and the unbecoming in actions. And, indeed, it is up-

on points of this nature that the business of the orator principally turns. For example, in the judiciary kind it relates to matters of equity ; as in the deliberative it is employed in determining the fit and the expedient : still however these two branches are not absolutely distinct, but that they are frequently blended with each other. Now it is impossible, when questions of this kind fall under the consideration of an orator, to enlarge upon them in all the elegant and enlivening spirit of an efficacious eloquence, unless he is perfectly well acquainted with human nature ; unless he understands the power and extent of moral duties, and can distinguish those actions which do not partake either of vice or virtue.

From the same source, likewise, he must derive his influence over the passions. For if he is skilled, for instance, in the nature of indignation, he will be so much the more capable of soothing or inflaming the breasts of his judges: if he knows wherein compassion consists, and by what workings of the heart it is moved, he will the more easily raise that tender affection of the soul. An orator trained up in this discipline and practised in these arts, will have full command over the breasts of his audience, in whatever disposition it may be his chance to find them : and thus furnished with all the numberless powers of persuasion, will judiciously vary and accommodate his eloquence, as particular circumstances and conjectures shall require. There are some, we find, who are most struck with that matter of elocution, where the arguments are drawn up in a short and close style : upon such an occasion the orator will experience the great advantage of being conversant in logick. Others, on the contrary, admire flowing and diffusive periods, where the illustrations are borrowed from the ordinary and familiar images of common observation : here the peripatetick writers will give him some assistance ; as indeed they will, in general, supply him with many useful hints in all the different methods of popular address. The academicks will inspire him with a becoming warmth : Plato with sublimity of sentiments, and Xenophon

nophon with an easy and elegant diction. Even the exclamatory manner of Epicurus, or Metrodorus, may be found in some circumstances, not altogether, unserviceable. In a word, what the stoicks pretend of their wise men, ought to be verified in our orator; and he should actually possess all human knowledge. Accordingly the ancients who applied themselves to eloquence, not only studied the civil laws, but also grammar, poetry, musick, and geometry. Indeed, there are few causes (perhaps I might justly say there are none) where in a skill in the first is not absolutely necessary; as there are many in which an acquaintance with the last mentioned sciences are highly requisite.

If it should be objected, that "eloquence is the single science requisite for the orator; as an occasional recourse to the others will be sufficient for all his purposes:" I answer; in the first place, there will always be a remarkable difference in the manner of applying what we take up, as it were, upon loan, and what we properly possess; so that it will ever be manifest, whether the orator is indebted to others for what he produces, or derives it from his own unborrowed fund. And in the next, the sciences throw an inexpressible grace over our compositions, even where they are not immediately concerned; as their effects are discernible where we least expect to find them. This powerful charm is not only distinguished by the learned and the judicious, but strikes even the most common and popular class of auditors; insomuch that one may frequently hear them applauding a speaker of this improved kind, as a man of genuine erudition: as enriched with the whole treasures of eloquence, and, in one word acknowledge the compleat orator. But I will take the liberty to affirm, that no man ever did, nor indeed ever can, maintain that exalted character, unless he enters the forum supported by the full strength of the united arts. Accomplishments, however, of this sort are now so totally neglected, that the pleadings of our orators are debased by the lowest expressions; as a general ignorance both of the laws of our country and the

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acts of the senate, is visible throughout their performances. All knowledge of the rights and customs of Rome is professedly ridiculed, and philosophy seems at present to be considered as something that ought to be shunned and dreaded. Thus eloquence, like a dethroned potentate, is banished her rightful dominions, and confined to barren points and low conceit: and she who was once mistress of the whole circle of sciences, and charmed every beholder with the goodly appearance of her glorious train, is now stripped of all her attendants, (I had almost said of all her genius) and seems as one of the meanest of the mechanick arts. This therefore, I consider as the first, and the principal reason of our having so greatly declined from the spirit of the ancients.

If I were called upon to support my opinion by authorities, might I not justly name, among the Grecians, Demosthenes; who, we are informed, constantly attended the lectures of Plato: as among our own countrymen, Cicero himself assures us, (and in these very words if I rightly remember) that he owed whatever advances he had made in eloquence, not to the rhetoricians, but to the academick philosophers.

Other, and very considerable, reasons might be produced for the decay of eloquence. But I leave them, my friends, as it is proper I should, to be mentioned by you; having performed my share in the examination of this question: and with a freedom, which will give, I imagine, as usual, much offence. I am sure, at least, if certain of our contemporaries were to be informed of what I have here maintained, I should be told, that in laying it down as a maxim, that a knowledge both of law and philosophy are essential qualifications in an orator, I have been fondly pursuing a phantom of my own imagination.

I am so far from thinking, replied Maternus, you have compleated the part you undertook, that I should rather imagine you had only given us the first general sketch of your design. You have marked out to us indeed, those sciences wherein the ancient orators were instructed,

instructed, and have placed in strong contrast their successful industry, with our unperforming ignorance. But something farther still remains : and as you have shewn us the superior acquirements of the orators in those more improved ages of eloquence, as well as the remarkable deficiency of those in our own times ; I should be glad you would proceed to acquaint us with the peculiar exercises by which the youth of those earlier days were wont to strengthen and improve their geniuses. For I dare say you will not deny, that oratory is acquired by practice far better than by precept. And our other two friends here, seem willing, I perceive, to admit it.

To which, when Aper and Secundus had signified their assent, Messalla, resuming his discourse, continued as follows :

Having then, as it should seem, disclosed to your satisfaction the seeds and first principles of ancient eloquence, by specifying the several kinds of arts to which the ancient orators were trained ; I shall now lay before you the method they pursued, in order to gain a facility in the exertion of eloquence. This, indeed, I have in some measure anticipated, by mentioning the preparatory arts to which they applied themselves : for it is impossible to make any progress in a compass so various and so abstruse, unless we not only strengthen our knowledge by reflection, but improve a general aptitude by frequent exercise. Thus it appears, that the same steps must be pursued in exerting our oratory, as in attaining it. But if this truth should not be universally admitted ; if any should think, that eloquence may be possessed without paying previous court to her attendant sciences ; most certainly, at least, it will not be denied, that a mind duly impregnated with the polite arts, will enter with so much the more advantage upon those exercises peculiar to the oratorical circus.

Accordingly, our ancestors when they designed a young man for the profession of eloquence, having previously taken care of his domestick education, and seasoned his mind with useful knowledge, introduced him

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to the most eminent orator in Rome. From that time the youth commenced his constant follower, attending him upon all occasions, whether he appeared in the publick assemblies of the people, or in the courts of civil judicature. Thus he learned, if I may use the expression, the arts of oratorical conflict in the very field of battle. The advantages which flowed from this method were considerable: it animated the courage and quickened the judgment of youth, thus to receive their instructions in the eye of the world, and in the midst of affairs; where no man could advance an absurd or a weak argument without being rejected by the bench, exposed by his adversary, and, in a word, despised by the whole audience. by this method they imbibed the pure and uncorrupted streams of genuine eloquence. But though they chiefly attached themselves to one particular orator, they heard likewise all the rest of their contemporary pleaders, in many of their respective debates. Hence also they had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the various sentiments of the people, and of observing what pleased or disgusted them most in the several orators of the Forum. By this means they were supplied with an instructor of the best and most improved kind, exhibiting, not the feigned semblance of eloquence, but her real and lively manifestation; not a pretended, but a genuine adversary, armed in earnest for the combat; an audience ever full and ever new, composed of foes as well as friends, and where not a single expression could fall uncensured, or unapplauded. For you will agree with me, I am well persuaded, when I assert, that a solid and lasting reputation of eloquence must be acquired by the censure of our enemies as well as by the applause of our friends; or rather, indeed, it is from the former that it derives its surest and most unquestioned strength and firmness. Accordingly, a youth thus formed to the bar, a frequent and attentive hearer of the most illustrious orators and debates, instructed by the experience of others, acquainted with the popular taste, and daily conversant in the laws of his country; to whom the solemn presence of the judges, and the awful

ful eyes of a full audience were familiar, rose at once into affairs, and was equal to every cause. Hence it was that Crassus at the age of nineteen, Cæsar at twenty-one, Pollio at twenty-two, and Calvus when he was but a few years older, pronounced those several speeches against Carbo, Dolabella, Cato, and Vatinius, which we read to this hour with admiration.

On the other hand, our modern youth receive their education under certain declaimers called Rhetoricians: a set of men who made their first appearance in Rome, a little before the time of Cicero. And that they were by no means approved by our ancestors, plainly appears from their being enjoined, under the censorship of Crassus and Domitius, to shut up their schools of *impudence*, as Cicero expresses it.—But I was going to say, we are sent to certain academies, where it is hard to determine whether the place, the company, or the method of instruction is most likely to infect the minds of young people, and produce a wrong turn of thought. For nothing, certainly, can there be of an affecting solemnity in an audience, where all who compose it are of the same low degree of understanding: nor any advantage to be received from their fellow-students, where a parcel of boys and raw youths of unripe judgments harangue before each other, without the least fear or danger of criticism. And as for their exercises, they are ridiculous in their very nature. They consist of two kinds, and are either declamatory or controversial. The first, as being easier and requiring less skill, is assigned to the younger lads: the other is the task of more mature years. But, good gods! with what incredible absurdity are they composed! The truth is, the style of their declamations is as false and contemptible, as the subjects are useless and fictitious. Thus, being taught to harangue in a most pompous diction, on the rewards due to tyrannicides, on the election to be made by despoiled virgins*, on the licentiousness of married women, on the

* It was one of the questions usually debated in these rhetorick-schools, whether the party who had been ravished

the ceremonies to be observed in times of pestilence, with other topicks of the same unconcerning kind, which are daily debated in the schools, and scarce ever at the bar; "they appear absolute novices in the affairs of the world, and are by much too elevated for common life."

"* Here Messalla paused: when Secundus, taking his turn in the conversation, began with observing, "that" the true and lofty spirit of genuine eloquence, like that of a clear and vigorous flame, is nourished by proper fuel, excited by agitation, and still brightens as it burns. It was in this manner, "said he," that the oratory of our ancestors was kindled and spread itself. The moderns have as much merit of this kind, perhaps, as can be acquired under a settled and peaceable government: but far inferior, no doubt, to that which shone out in the times of licentiousness and confusion, when He was deemed the ablest orator, who had most influence
over

ravished should choose to marry the violator of her chastity, or rather have him put to death.

* The latter part of Messalla's discourse, together with what immediately followed it in the original, is lost: The chasm, however, does not seem to be so great as some of the commentators suspect. The translator therefore has ventured to fill it up in his own way, with those lines which are distinguished by inverted comma's. He has likewise given the next subsequent part of the conversation to Secundus; though it does not appear in the original to whom it belongs. It would be of no great importance to the English reader, to justify our translator in this last article: though, perhaps, it would not be very difficult, if it were necessary.

To save the reader the trouble of turning to a second note upon a like occasion, it is proper to observe in this place, that he will find the same inverted comma's in page 161. The words included between them, are also an addition of the translator's: and for the same reason as that just now mentioned.

over a restless and ungoverned multitude. To this situation of publick affairs was owing those continual debates concerning the Agrarian laws, and the popularity consequent thereupon; those long harangues of the magistrates, those impeachments of the great, those factions of the nobles, those hereditary enmities in particular families, and in fine, those incessant struggles between the senate and the commons; which, though each of them prejudicial to the state, yet most certainly contributed to produce and encourage that rich vein of eloquence which discovered itself in those tempestuous days. The way to dignity lay directly through the paths of eloquence. The more a man signalized himself by his abilities in this art, so much the more easily he opened his road to preferment, and maintained an ascendant over his colleagues, at the same time that it heightened his interest with the nobles, his authority with the senate, and his reputation with the people in general. The patronage of these admired orators was courted even by foreign nations; as the several magistrates of our own, endeavoured to recommend themselves to their favour and protection, by shewing them the highest marks of honour whenever they set out for the administration of their respective provinces, and by studiously cultivating a friendship with them at their return. They were called upon, without any solicitation on their own part, to fill up the supreme dignities of the state. Nor were they even in a private station without great power, as by means of the persuasive arts they had a very considerable influence over both the senate and the people. The truth is, it was an established maxim in those days, that without the oratorical talents, no man could either acquire or maintain any high post in the government. And no wonder indeed, that such a notion should universally prevail: since it was impossible for any person endued with this commanding art, to pass his life in obscurity, how much soever it might be agreeable to his own inclinations; since it was not sufficient merely to vote in the senate, without supporting that vote with good sense and eloquence; since in all publick impeachments

ments or civil causes, the accused was obliged to answer to the charge in his own person; since written depositions were not admitted in judicial matters, but the witnesses were called upon to deliver their evidence in open court. Thus our ancestors were eloquent, as much by necessity as by encouragements. To be possessed of the persuasive talents, was esteemed the highest glory; as the contrary character was held in the utmost contempt. In a word, they were incited to the pursuit of oratory, by a principle of honour as well as by a view of interest. They dreaded the disgrace of being considered rather as clients than patrons; of losing those dependants which their ancestors had transmitted to them, and seeing them mix in the train of others: in short, of being looked upon as men of mean abilities, and consequently either passed over in the disposal of high offices, or despised in the administration of them.

I know not whether those ancient historical pieces, which were lately collected and published by Mucianus from the old libraries where they have hitherto been preserved, have yet fallen into your hands. This collection consists of eleven volumes of the publick journals, and three of epistles; by which it appears that Pompey and Crassus gained as much advantage from their eloquence as their arms: that Lucullus, Metellus, Lentulus, Curio, and the rest of those distinguished chiefs, devoted themselves with great application to this insinuating art: in a word, that not a single person in those times rose to any considerable degree of power without the assistance of the rhetorical talents.

To these considerations may be farther added, that the dignity and importance of the debates in which the ancients were engaged, contributed greatly to advance their eloquence. Most certain, indeed, it is, that an orator must necessarily find great difference with respect to his powers, when he is to harangue only upon some trifling robbery, or a little paultry form of pleading; and when the faculties of his mind are warmed and enlivened by such interesting and animating topicks as bribery at elections, as the oppression of our allies, or the massacre

sacre of our fellow-citizens. Evils these, which, beyond all peradventure, it were better should never happen; and we have reason to rejoice that we live under a government where we are strangers to such terrible calamities: still it must be acknowledged, that wherever they did happen, they were wonderful incentives to eloquence. For the orator's genius rises and expands itself in proportion to the dignity of the occasion upon which it is exerted; and I will lay it down as a maxim, that it is impossible to shine out in all the powerful lustre of genuine eloquence, without being inflamed by a suitable importance of subject. Thus the speech of Demosthenes against his guardians, scarcely, I imagine, established his character; as it was not the defence of Archias, or Quinctius, that acquired Cicero the reputation of a consummate orator. It was Catiline, and Milo, and Verres, and Mark Anthony, that warmed him with that noble glow of eloquence, which gave the finishing brightness to his unequalled fame. Far am I from insinuating, that such infamous characters deserve to be tolerated in a state, in order to supply convenient matter of oratory: all I contend for is, that this art flourishes to most advantage in turbulent times. Peace, no doubt, is infinitely preferable to war; but it is the latter only that forms the soldier. It is just the same with eloquence: the oftner she enters, if I may so say, the field of battle; the more wounds she gives and receives; the more powerful the adversary with which she contends; so much the more ennobled she appears in the eye of mankind. For it is the disposition of human nature, always to admire what we see is attended with danger and difficulty in others, how much soever we may choose ease and security for ourselves.

Another advantage which the ancient orators had over the moderns, is, that they were not confined in their pleadings, as we are, to a few hours. On the contrary, they were at liberty to adjourn as often as they thought proper; they were unlimited as to the number of days or of counsel, and every orator might extend his speech
to

to the length most agreeable to himself. Pompey, in his third consulship, was the first who curbed the spirit of eloquence: still however permitting all causes to be heard, agreeably to the laws, in the forum and before the Prætors. How much more considerable the business of those magistrates was, than that of the centumvirs, who at present determine all causes, is evident from this circumstance, that not a single oration of Cicero, Cæsar, or Brutus, or in short of any one celebrated orator, was spoken before these last, excepting only those of Pollio in favour of the heirs of Urbinia. But then it must be remembered, that these were delivered about the middle of the reign of Augustus, when a long and uninterrupted peace abroad, a perfect tranquillity at home, together with the general good conduct of that wise prince, had damped the flames of eloquence as well as those of sedition.

You will smile, perhaps, at what I am going to say, and I mention it for that purpose: but is there not something in the present confined garb of our orators, that has an ill effect even upon their elocution, and makes it appear low and contemptible? May we not suppose likewise that much of the spirit of oratory is sunk, by that close and despicable scene wherein many of our causes are now debated? For the orator, like a generous steed, requires a free and open space wherein to expatiate, otherwise the force of his powers is broken, and half the energy of his talents is check'd in their career. There is another circumstance also exceedingly prejudicial to the interest of eloquence, as it prevents a due attention to style: we are now obliged to enter upon our speech whenever the judge calls upon us; not to mention the frequent interruptions which arise by the examination of witnesses. Besides, the courts of judicature are at present so unfrequented, that the orator seems to stand alone, and talk to bare walls. But eloquence rejoiceth in the clamour of loud applause, and exults in a full audience, such as used to press round the ancient orators when the forum stood thronged with nobles; when a numerous retinue of clients, when foreign ambaf-

ambassadors, and whole cities assisted at the debate; and when even Rome herself was concerned in the event. The very appearance of that prodigious concourse of people, which attended the trials of Bestia, Cornelius, Scaurus, Milo and Vatinius, must have enflamed the breast of the coldest orator. Accordingly we find, that of all the ancient orations now extant, there are none which have more eminently distinguished their authors, than those which were pronounced under such favourable circumstances. To these advantages we may farther add likewise, the frequent general assemblies of the people, the privilege of arraigning the most considerable personages, and the popularity of such impeachments; when the sons of oratory spared not even Scipio, Sylla, or Pompey; and when, in consequence of such acceptable attacks upon suspected power, they were sure of being heard by the people with the utmost attention and regard. How must these united causes contribute to raise the genius, and inspire the eloquence of the ancients!

“ Maternus, who, you will remember, was in the
 “ midst of his harangue in favour of poetry when Mes-
 “ salla first entered into the room, finding Secundus
 “ was now silent, took that opportunity of resuming
 “ his invektive against the exercise of the oratorical arts
 “ in general.” That species of eloquence, said he,
 wherein poetry is concerned, is calm and peaceable,
 moderate and virtuous: whereas that other supreme
 kind, which my two friends here have been describing,
 is the offspring of licentiousness (by fools miscalled li-
 berty) and the companion of sedition; bold, obstinate
 and haughty, unknowing how to yield or how to obey,
 an encourager of a lawless populace, and a stranger in
 all well-regulated communities. Who ever heard of an
 orator in Lacedæmon or Crete? cities which exercised
 the severest discipline, and were governed by the strict-
 est laws. We have no account of Persian or Macedo-
 nian eloquence, or indeed of that of any other state
 which submitted to a regular administration of govern-
 ment. Whereas Rhodes and Athens (places of popu-
 lar

lar rule, where all things lay open to all men) swarmed with orators innumerable. In the same manner, Rome, while she was under no settled policy; while she was torn with parties, dissensions, and factions; while there was no peace in the forum, no harmony in the senate, no moderation in the judges; while there was neither reverence paid to superiors, nor bounds prescribed to magistrates—Rome, under these circumstances, produced, beyond all dispute, a stronger and brighter vein of eloquence; as some valuable plants will flourish even in the wildest soil. But the tongue of the Gracchi, did nothing compensate the republic for their seditious laws; nor the superior eloquence of Cicero, make him any amends for his sad catastrophe.

The truth is, the forum (that single remain which now survives of ancient oratory) is, even in its present situation, an evident proof that all things amongst us are not conducted in that well ordered manner one could wish. For, tell me, is it not the guilty or the miserable alone, that fly to us for assistance? When any community implores our protection, is it not because it either is insulted by some neighbouring state, or torn by domestick feuds? And what province ever seeks our patronage, till she has been plundered or oppressed? But far better it surely is, never to have been injured, than at last to be redressed. If there was a government in the world free from commotions and disturbances, the profession of oratory would there be as useless, as that of medicine to the sound: and as the physician would have little practice or profit among the healthy and the strong, so neither would the orator have much business or honour where obedience and good manners universally prevail. To what purpose are studied speeches in a senate, where the better and the major part of the assembly are already of one mind? What the expediency of haranguing the populace, where publick affairs are not determined by the voice of an ignorant giddy multitude, but by the steady wisdom of a single person? To what end voluntary informations, where crimes are unfrequent and inconsiderable? or of laboured and invidious defences,

defences, where the clemency of the judge is ever on the side of the accused? Believe me then, my worthy (and, as far as the circumstances of the age require, my eloquent) friends, had the gods reversed the date of your existence, and placed *You* in the times of those ancients we so much admire, and *Them* in yours; *You* would not have fallen short of that glorious spirit which distinguished their oratory, nor would *they* have been destitute of a proper temperature and moderation. But since a high reputation for eloquence is not consistent with great repose in the publick; let every age enjoy its own peculiar advantages, without derogating from those of a former.

Maternus having ended; Messalla observed, that there were some points which his friend had laid down, that were not perfectly agreeable to his sentiments; as there were others, which he wished to hear explained more at large: but the time is now, said he, too far advanced. If I have maintained any thing, replied Maternus, which requires to be opened more explicitly, I shall be ready to clear it up in some future conference: at the same time rising from his seat and embracing Aper; Messalla and I (continued he smiling) shall arraign you, be well assured, before the poets and the admirers of the ancients. And I both of you (returned Aper) before the rhetoricians. Thus we parted in mutual good humour.

F I N I S.

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